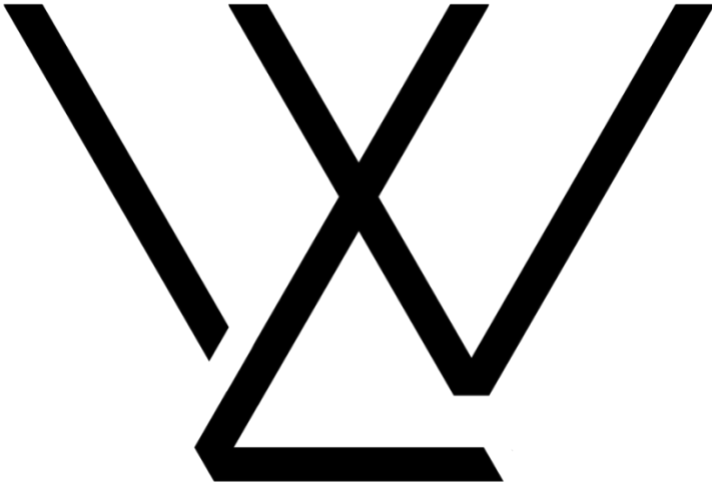


WEEKS 1 - 5



GENESIS 1:1 - 2:1-17



Word to Life's are sermon-aligned study guides, created to help the church dive even deeper into the passages we study together on Sundays.

Each week there will be five studies to help you prepare for the upcoming weekend sermon. This will also be a great discussion tool at your next LifeGroup meeting.

We hope you enjoy and grow deeper in your faith!

Contributors

Sabino Medrano, Jonathan O'Neill, Leeanna Porter, Lucas Campbell, Stephen Kimpel, and Josh Sharpe

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Week 1: Genesis 1:1-3

Day 1: Exploring the Biblical Text

READ: Genesis 1:1-3

EXPLORE:

Instructions: Spend time reading Genesis 1:1-3 and complete the activities below.

- **Activity:** After reading the biblical text a few times through, write down some notes about what you notice.
 - Write and reflect upon the actions of God depicted in the first three verses of Scripture.

- **Question:** We will focus this week on how Genesis is designed to inform us theologically (*about God*). What truths about God's nature and character do you see in Genesis 1:1-3?

- **Question:** The Psalms consistently call their reader/listener to reflect upon God's creating and sustaining qualities which are visible in the creation

narrative of Genesis 1. Spend some time reading, praying, and reflecting on the passages below.

- Psalm 24
 - Psalm 33:1-9
 - Psalm 95
- **Optional Activity:** In apologetics,¹ there are many defenses for the existence of God. One of the logical arguments called the “Kalam Cosmological Argument” presents the case for God’s existence using themes which are visible in Genesis and scientific thought. Briefly search online for the Kalam Cosmological Argument and summarize its three assertions below.
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¹ Apologetics can be defined as the art and science of defending the Christian faith.

Week 1: Genesis 1:1-3

Day 2: Who Created God?

READ: Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:13-14; John 8:56-59

EXPLORE:

Who created God? No one. He has always been. God is eternal, without beginning or end. Christian theology and scientific thought assert that the uncaused first cause of the universe was a transcendent and powerfully creative force which is rightly defined as God. Scientists largely agree that the universe has a beginning. Modern cosmologists especially recognize the universe's beginning and its apparent fine-tuning for our existence. The question lingers, "How did the universe come to exist?" While some reach and grasp for unverifiable explanations even more bizarre than pagan mythology, may we humbly and gratefully communicate the answer, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

In the Old Testament, God told Moses that His name is "*I Am Who I Am*,"² and Jesus identified Himself as the eternal, original God by claiming "*Before Abraham was, I am*."³ God didn't come from anything, He just is. All other things depend on God for their existence; God is completely independent and fully self-sufficient. He is the foundational reality that underlies everything else.

Current academic "scholarship" would have us believe that Genesis has more in common with ancient mythology than with modern science. However, from its very first verse, Genesis is set apart from polytheistic origin stories. Murray Adamthwaite explains this truth.

"Pagan, polytheistic mythology moves in the same groove— generation by sexual union, conflict among the gods, continuum of gods and earth substance, and the emergent supremacy of one god among the many... Nothing of this has anything whatever to do with Genesis 1! The narrative begins with the

² See Exodus 3:14 for reference.

³ See John 8:58 for reference.

one true God who is there at the beginning; there is a clear creator–creature distinction; there is a pure and exalted tone about Genesis 1, untainted with the crudities of mythology and showing forth a transcendent God. Hence pagan mythology, in whatever culture, is basically all of one genre; Genesis is in a very different league....”⁴

Despite the grandeur of ancient pagan civilizations, polytheism prevented them from achieving the pace of scientific discovery and innovation, which characterizes modernity. They described nature not through physical laws, but through the capricious actions of depraved deities. We need to remember that although God revealed Himself uniquely to Israel, they battled consistently against backsliding into pagan, polytheistic idolatry.

As Christianity spread, people gradually rejected polytheistic explanations of natural phenomena. They understood that one divine lawgiver was responsible for all of nature. This paved the way for modern science, as monotheists sought to discover the laws by which God governs nature. Regardless of how many of today’s scientists reject God, the very assumptions of science imply a trustworthy, objective reality and lawgiver beyond the universe.

BIG IDEA: As the originator of all things, God has no origin. He is completely independent and eternal.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Make a list of things and people that you need. Allow the list that you have formed remind you of the total self-sufficiency of God.
- **Questions:** Why does God call Himself “I Am?” What did Jesus mean by “Before Abraham was, I am?”
- **Questions:** Does belief in God depend on science? Does science depend on belief in God? Are the two in conflict?

⁴ See https://creation.com/images/pdfs/tj/j27_2/j27_2_99-104.pdf for reference.

Week 1: Genesis 1:1-3

Day 3: God is Supreme

READ: Genesis 1:1-3 and Nehemiah 9:6

EXPLORE:

In our study through the book of Genesis, we need to be consistently reminded that the biblical text is not just notifying us of events, it is informing us on theology. The opening words of Genesis are no exception. After establishing the foundational truth of God as the creator, Genesis 1:2 intentionally crafts an image of God's supremacy. The idea of the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters and the primordial abyss of nothingness was a powerful reminder that God existed over everything from the very beginning.

Throughout Scripture, the imagery presented in Genesis 1:1-1:3 is consistently used to reassure humanity not only of God's creative work, but of His power over that which He created. In the context of the Ancient Near East and often within the biblical text, water was used a symbol of chaos. For many in the ancient world, the notion of "*waters*" naturally implied the notion of disorder, turmoil, and the unknown. As such, we need to rightly appreciate how the hovering of God's Spirit over the waters theologically communicates His rule over the chaos. God was not concocted in the ancient Jewish mindset from the chaos, He reigns supreme over it!

The idea that God brings order to disorder and authoritative rule to the chaos is one of several important theological claims being established in the opening words of Scripture, and it was a powerful reminder throughout biblical history. An example of this dynamic playing out can be found in the book of Nehemiah.

After a period of grief-filled confession, the Levites commanded the people to worship God, saying, *“You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.”*⁵

Following the example of Nehemiah 9:6 and other texts which pull from Genesis 1, we can readily and rightly interpret the Scriptures in the same way that the Scriptures interpret themselves. The assurance that God remains supreme over the chaos was and still is a powerful source of hope for those amidst the messiness of life. When we remember that Genesis is designed to not only inform us historically, but also theologically, we can appreciate more fully how God reigns supreme over everything.

BIG IDEA: God is rightly depicted in Genesis as One who was, is, and will remain supreme over chaos.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Read Paul’s address in Athens recorded in Acts 17:16-34. In what ways did Paul incorporate theological themes present in Genesis 1:1-3 in his defense before the Areopagus.
- **Question:** Today’s Word to Life referenced how the ancient contexts and the Bible often depict water as chaos.
 - a. What are some scriptural depictions of water as chaotic that come to mind?
 - b. Additionally, what are some ways that God demonstrates His supremacy and even His redemptive power over water?

⁵ See Nehemiah 9:6 for reference.

Week 1: Genesis 1:1-3

Day 4: You Are Not the Star of the Show.

READ: Read Genesis 1:1-2:3

EXPLORE:

You can be anything you want to be! Put your mind to it! If you believe it, you can achieve it! If you grew up like me (Lucas), these affirmations were all too common. Whether it was from teachers, public service announcements, or inspirational quotes from celebrities, the overwhelming message the world seemed to have for me was that, in the movie of my life, I was the writer, the director, and the star. Thirty years later, society has doubled down on that message. We are constantly bombarded with the idea that YOU can choose YOUR path, YOUR truth.

This week's passage begins with the creation account. Take a moment to read through Genesis 1:1-2:3. Make a note of every time the words "God," "He," and "His" appear. You should find over 50 mentions of God in this small passage. To put this in context, God, inspiring Moses to write His words, points back to Himself as He gives the account of how He created His world. God makes the message abundantly clear for us. If the creation account were a movie, God is the star of the show, not us. This message remains clear throughout Scripture. From eternity past to eternity future, God is the main character. As Romans 11:36 states, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

As I consider the problem of self-focus, I often wonder how much of it is exacerbated by the environment in which most of us exist. Not only have we been told that we can be whatever we want to be, we live in an environment where it seems possible. We celebrate the stories of people going from rags to riches and obscurity to stardom. In fact, it is possible that any natural-born citizen in this country can become the president one day. Think about that. Most of us grow up having the possibility of being the leader of the free world should if we desired to pursue it.

Don't get me wrong, I'm thankful to live in a land of freedom and opportunity, especially as it affords us the ability to worship God without the threat of persecution. It is a privilege that many have given their lives to preserve. And, in the scope of history, even today, many Christian brothers

and sisters do not have this freedom. It is also important to note that self-focus is not an American problem; it is a sin problem. But I do wonder how much harder it is for me to grasp the concept of Christ as sovereign King. I do not know what it's like to live in a land in which the possibility does not exist for me to use my voice and my vote to effect change. I do not know what it is like to live in a land in which I am purely at the mercy of the one in charge without any hope that I could rise to the ranks of power. No, ever present in my experience of the world is the physical "freedom" to be the star of my own show.

I wonder how often I bring this felt "freedom" into my relationship with God. He is the King. He is sovereign. And yet, I don't always live like I believe it. Too often, when God's plan for my life doesn't line up with my own, I grasp for control of my destiny. When God's timeline is different than mine, I struggle with the false idea that I would make a better timekeeper.⁶ Instead of seeing God's kingdom as a democracy where I can be whatever and whoever I want to be, I must see it as a kingdom that causes me to say, "I can't believe I get to live under the rule and reign of this perfect King! Why would I want to take a place that only belongs to Him?"

BIG IDEA: You are not the star of the show. God is.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** If you did not already do so, take some time to underline every mention of God in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Why do you think God has so emphasized His role in creation?

- **Activity:** Living in a "land of opportunity" offers an unlimited supply of potential outcomes. In this scenario, it is far too easy to waste one's life pursuing selfish desires. How can you make sure you are seeking God's path for your life instead of your own?
 - Study the following passages as you prayerfully consider this question: James 4:13-17; Ephesians 2:10.

⁶ We will study the origins of these struggles in Genesis 3 in future weeks.

Week 1: Genesis 1:1-3

Day 5: Wisdom and Power | God is Creator

READ TOGETHER: Genesis 1:1-3, John 1:1-5, Proverbs 3:19, Revelation 4:11

***Instructions:** We believe that Biblical study and spiritual growth are meant to be shared. This Word to Life has that exact focus in mind. For some, Day 5 might be a good opportunity to lead your family in a devotional. For others, this study might serve as a simple reminder to tactfully communicate your faith with those around you. Regardless, Day 5 of each week is designed to help you grow in your faith by sharing it with others.*

EXPLORE TOGETHER:

“Once upon a time” is one of the most popular openings of a book. It is probably the most used opening. You would have to fact check me (Sabino) on that one though. This opening works well for the beginning of a story. But how does one begin the story of God? Moses had a big task in front of him writing out the record of God. God wanted Moses to start with God’s creation of all that is seen. We can learn many things about God from these opening three verses, but we will focus on God’s wisdom and power.

Consider the genius that God needed to create all things that are in the universe. We are told that He started in the beginning. In His wisdom, He knew exactly what time to start His creation. It was not too soon or too late. Neither one of those categories makes any sense when you consider eternity before time began. In verse one of the Bible, God begins time as we know it. As we can see, God has great vision for the creation of the universe. He knew exactly what He was creating, a heaven and an earth. There was no redo or mistakes made. All things were good as we will later see. He gave form, shape, and light to a formless, void, dark

earth. He gave light not so that He could see, but so that we could see.

Consider the power that God needed to create the heavens and the earth. As we think about the vast galaxies and the countless fiery stars, God's power is on full display. The energy in the universe is but a mere reflection of the energy and power within God. For us, we are overwhelmed by God's immense power on display in the universe, but for God, it was as easy as speaking a word to create it. God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.

Like I said, there is much more that can and should be said. However, we should also briefly speak on what our response should be to God's creative wisdom and power. As we read and meditate on these three verses, we ought to erupt in praise toward God! When we do this, we join with all of creation as we proclaim that God has done all things well!

BIG IDEA: The wisdom and power of God seen in creation should cause us to praise and worship God.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** What characteristics of God do you see in the first three verses of Scripture?

- **Activity:** When you think of the terms "wisdom" and "power" in the Christian faith, how do those two terms go together?

Week 2: Genesis 1:3-25

Day 1: Exploring the Biblical Text

READ: Genesis 1:3-2:3

EXPLORE:

Instructions: Spend time reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 and complete the activities below.

- **Activity:** Complete the table below and write what you notice.⁷

Day	What did God create on this day?	Day	What did God create on this day?
1		4	
2		5	
3		6	
Day	What occurred on the seventh day?		
7			

⁷ The sermon will focus on Genesis 1:3-25, but it is important to see the scope of creation to Genesis 2:3.

- **Question:** Each of the days of creation in Genesis 1:1-25 have a similar rhythm and word choice. What are some similarities you notice between each section?

- **Question:** How would you describe the style of Genesis 1:1-25? What does the order and sequence of the creation account teach you about God's character?

- **Question:** How many times in Genesis 1:1-31 do you see the word "good?" How might the frequent inclusion of the word "good" be theologically significant?

Week 2: Genesis 1:3-25

Day 2: Can Old Earth and Young Earth Creationists Work Together?

READ: Genesis 1:3-25

EXPLORE:

A controversial and, at times, fiery debate has arisen within the Christian faith concerning how to best understand the creation story of Genesis. The debate concerns whether the “days” of Genesis ought to be interpreted as literal 24-hour blocks or as extended periods of time. This debate is often labelled the “Young Earth versus Old Earth” perspective of Genesis. When our church leadership decided to study through Genesis, this contentious question of modernity was one of our first areas of discussion. For those who desire a conclusive answer or a comprehensive discussion in this Word to Life Study, you will be sorely disappointed. My (Stephen) aim in this study is to summarize the debate, provide a word of pastoral encouragement, and supply you with additional resources to continue the discussion on your own.

As mentioned previously, the debate within Christianity about the age of the earth has been quite controversial throughout the last century. (In fairness, it is typically the more controversial topics that get the most attention.) Young earth creationists read the days⁸ as literal 24-hour periods as it seems to be plainly visible in the Genesis account. Those who defend an old earth view of creation believe that the days of Genesis can be translated as extended periods of time as it is used in other areas of Scripture.⁹

⁸ In Hebrew the word is *Yom*.

⁹ Psalm 90:4 is a typical example of evidence for the Hebrew word *yom* being used to define an extended time period rather than a literal 24-hour time frame.

Additionally, an old earth creationist may posit that the creative work of God in Genesis 1:1-2 occurred before the days were detailed in the biblical text. As such, they could still assert that a literal 24-hour rendering of “day” begins in v.3.

We need to acknowledge that fundamental disagreements on the age of the earth exist amongst those who believe God created, value the authority of Scripture, and believe that science is a credible means of revealing God’s design. The debate continues and the goal of this study is not to bring it to an end. Rather, the goal is to make sure we are thinking biblically about how to think biblically. This conversation is about the right interpretation of Scripture and not whether the events therein took place.

First, regardless of your conclusion concerning this question, we need to acknowledge the fact that we can act sinfully in the defense of what we think is right. It is woefully easy to neglect humility, love, and respect when we are in the complexity of an argument. Too many young earth creationists have been accused of being anti-science. In the same manner, too many old earth creationists have been accused of having a low regard for Scriptural authority. Satan smiles and the world sits in confusion when the church fights within itself. It has been truly said that in essentials, we ought to have unity, in non-essentials we ought to have liberty, and in everything we ought to demonstrate charity.

Second, we need to realize that the fundamental disagreement between Bible-believing, God-fearing Christians who value science has existed and will continue to exist. We often ask important questions of the biblical text that the Bible is not directly interested in answering. Certainly, there is an answer to this hotly debated question, but that does not mean the Bible was designed to answer it. In the fact that God is the creator, Christians must agree. On the way students of the biblical text understand the age of the earth, there remains disagreement.

Finally, we need to see this debate within the scope of history. If we traveled back in time a few centuries, we could stumble into a room full of Christians debating how, if God *set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved*,¹⁰ Galileo could suppose the earth orbits the sun. It was seen as unbiblical at the time, but we can now see through a right understanding of the Psalms how the biblical text was saying something quite different after all. A passion for Scriptural authority ought not be falsely opposed to scientific discovery. In conversations like this and others like it, may those in the church meet each other with truth and grace as it is befitting for those under the Lordship of King Jesus.

BIG IDEA: The young earth vs. old earth conversation gives us the opportunity to think biblically about what it means to think and live biblically.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Today's study merely introduced the topic; it did not comprehensively discuss it. As time allows, view the following free resources for further discussion.
 - o [The Bible and the age of the Earth? | John Lennox at SMU](#)
 - o [Do You Accept "Old Earth" and Evolution? | John Piper](#)
 - o [Do we live on a young or an old earth? - Ken Ham vs Jeff Zweerink](#)

¹⁰ See Psalm 104:5 for reference.

Week 2: Genesis 1:3-25

Day 3: Creative Power of God's Word

READ: Genesis 1:3-25, Psalm 119:9-16, John 1:1-18

EXPLORE:

THE WORD IN CREATION

With one breath from the mouth of the Lord the entire universe bursts forth into existence. Billions of galaxies and trillions of stars race to their appointed places. Once set, each begins to spin, rotate, freeze, burn, and glow just as the Lord has directed. To sit and contemplate the power of God in creation should do nothing less than consume us with awe and wonder. This is the reason for this demonstration of such power in creation, that the Lord's majesty would be put on display for His own glory. In fact, even creation itself is screaming shouts of praise across the universe. As David says, "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."¹¹

THE WORD IN REDEMPTION

The creative and transforming power of God's Word does not end in creation though. We see that with this same breath, the Lord gives us His Word, the Scriptures, that we might be redeemed and *recreated* by His power. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we become a new creation,¹² which comes by hearing the Word of God.¹³ Paul tells Timothy that "all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."¹⁴ We are drawn to redemption and made new by this powerful Word.

¹¹ See Psalm 19:1 for reference.

¹² See 2 Corinthians 5:17 for reference

¹³ See Romans 10:17 for reference.

¹⁴ See 2 Timothy 3:16 for reference.

THE WORD AND THE INCARNATION

I would be remiss if I didn't point out the linchpin between the Word in creation and the Word in redemption. In a stunning act, this creating Word of God, does something that no one would have ever imagined. It (He), "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" This is known as the *incarnation*. The Word of God, Jesus, takes on flesh and becomes a man. It is through the death of Jesus Christ (the Word), that the power of God to forgive us and redeem us is unleashed.¹⁵

Right now, in this very moment, the Word of God that created the heavens and the earth, is living, active, and doing a transformative work. In God's grace, your life is meant to be another demonstration of the power of His Word. He is actively drawing you to Himself so that you would be recreated by His grace to take your place alongside the stars and galaxies and sing the praises of His glory. When we read this creation account and investigate the stars at night, feel the warmth of the blazing sun, or watch children laugh and play, you must allow your heart to remember that this was all from the mouth of the living God. This God sees you, loves you, and sent His only son to redeem you – all by the power of the Word!

BIG IDEA: The power of God's Word is seen in creation, the incarnation, and redemption. This demonstration of power and action should cause us to praise and bring glory to the Lord.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Take time one evening this week and go outside for 15 uninterrupted minutes. Look into the sky and reflect on the creation, incarnation, and redemption offered by God. In that moment, offer Him praise.

¹⁵ See Colossians 1:14 for reference.

Week 2: Genesis 1:3-25

Day 4: The Goodness of God's Design

READ: Genesis 1:3-25

EXPLORE:

Before human rebellion against God's design was introduced into the world,¹⁶ creation abounded in goodness and beauty. One effect that sin has on us today is the idolatrous disconnect between the beauty of our created world and the God to whom it points. The Genesis account, alongside the whole of Scripture, is clear that creation ought to bring us to a place where we simultaneously marvel at the grandeur of God and soberly consider the relative smallness of ourselves.

The Psalms reflect this idea, writing, *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?"*¹⁷ That which God has created is designed intentionally to help us marvel at His goodness and intentionality. Let's take a closer look at Genesis 1:3-25 again to unpack these ideas further.

It is virtually impossible to read the creation story of Genesis and not be left with an indelible impression of God's goodness and His intentionality. In Genesis, God powerfully declares what was, what is, and what will be as all creation, at the very sound of His voice, bursts into existence. As readers of this ancient text, we are meant to join God's people throughout history in marveling not only at the greatness of God, but at the goodness with which He creates.

¹⁶ We will study the sin of Adam and Eve which is often entitled "The Fall" in our study of Genesis 3.

¹⁷ See Psalm 8:3-4 for reference.

We could rightly summarize Genesis 1 as the most “densely good” chapter in all of Scripture. Even though we cannot fully appreciate what it must have been like before humanity sinned, the creation story of Genesis invites us to be reminded of God’s goodness and His beauty. In fact, His goodness, established in the opening chapter of the Bible, is a fundamental idea which is unpacked throughout the rest of Scripture.

God did not say, “Creation was very good, but, because of sin, I am abandoning it altogether.” Quite the contrary is true. Scripture echoes the graciousness of God to not abandon a good creation now marred by sin, but to redeem it for His glory.

BIG IDEA: The goodness of God’s design is an important theme we need to see in Genesis and appreciate throughout Scripture.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Even though our current world is marred by the effects of sin, what are some examples you can think of that still reflect the goodness of God’s design?
- **Question:** If you were sharing your testimony with someone who was not a Christian, how might you incorporate the theme of God’s goodness (*which is visible in Genesis*) into your story?
- **Activity:** Spend some time intentionally reading and working to memorize Psalm 8:3-4.

Week 2: Genesis 1:3-25

Day 5: The First Day of The World.

READ TOGETHER: Genesis 1:3-5, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Revelation 22:16

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EXPLORE TOGETHER:

The first day of the world ended. What an amazing statement! This tells us that the world had a beginning. It is not eternal, but God is. This was a day not too different from our own. It had a day and a night, a morning, and an evening.

On this first day, God separated the light from the darkness, never to be joined together again. He divided time in a constant and regular succession between them. Day follows night and night follows day as a continuous pattern until the end of time. Both night and day have their place and purpose. Man works in the day for the glory of God and rests in the night for the glory of God. Both day and night are the Lord's for He has named them. Therefore, we ought to honor God in both the day and the night. We can see that our God is orderly and we ought to thank Him that He separated the light from the darkness so we are not left confused.

On the first day, the darkness of the evening came before the light of the morning. As we read through the text of Scripture, we recognize that this is also the first day of the week. It is a Sunday.

We know this because God rested on the 7th day, which the Jews called the Sabbath or Saturday. Why is this significant? Well, as we know, our Lord Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday, the first day of the week. One could say that the “new world” began on the first day of the week due to Jesus’ resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus sets off the redemption of God’s people and the restoration of all things. Early in the light of the morning on Easter Sunday our Lord’s body was raised from the dead as the Bright Morning Star! The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

BIG IDEA: The first day of the world points to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** “And God said,” is mentioned seven times in Genesis 1. What do you think is the significance of this statement?
- **Activity:** Do your best to describe what day one of the world might have been like and what resurrection Sunday might have been like.

- **Activity and Question:** Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 and write take some notes on what you notice. What potential connections do you see from 2 Corinthians to Genesis 1?

- **Question:** Genesis 1:31 marks the sixth and final day of creation. If you were to summarize a lasting impression of God visible in v. 31, what would it be?

Week 3: Genesis 1:26-31

Day 2: God's Handiwork in Humanity

READ: Genesis 1:26-31

EXPLORE:

For those who participated in last week's study of Genesis 1:3-25, I (Stephen) have good news and I have even better news. The good news is that we are studying a much smaller section of text. The even better news is that the concluding verses in Genesis 1 are among some of the most profoundly significant and jam-packed in all of Scripture. We could easily spend weeks talking about this text and its theological implications, but we only have a few days. So, without further ado, let's begin with the uniqueness of how God created humanity.

From the opening verses of Genesis 1, there is something anticipatory about the creation order and rhythm. There is an ascending order of God's creative work which creates an expectation for the reader. When the narrative reaches the sixth day, there are a few distinctive things we should notice.

First, God's creation of man is the only creative act in which we read, *"Let us make."*¹⁸ In earlier references to how God created, we read more impersonal phrases like *"Let there be..."*¹⁹ or *"Let the earth..."*²⁰ In contrast, when God created Adam there was an intentional switch in language to highlight the personal and exclusive connection between the Creator and a creation that was specifically made in His image.

Second, the phrase, *"Let us make"* has historically and theologically begged the question, "Who is the 'us' referred to in the creation of Adam?" Two options are typically presented which are within the realm of possibility. It is possible that the "us" is a personal form of what is often called the "majestic plural." For example, the Psalmist writes, *"the*

¹⁸ See Genesis 1:26 for reference.

¹⁹ See Genesis 1:3, 6, and 14 for reference.

²⁰ See Genesis 1:11 and 24 for reference.

heavens declare the glory of God."²¹ In the ancient mindset, it was possible to articulate a plural to declare its glory. The probable answer is that the "us" refers to a conversation within the godhead or Trinity. Certainly, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed co-eternally before creation and this understanding of "us" is compelling.

Third, the creation of man is given more description and more space in the chapter than any other creation. Finally, this text emphasizes how man was created in the image of God.²² This is a concept we will explore further in tomorrow's study, but it establishes humanity, male and female, as the pinnacle of creation in being made in God's own image.

BIG IDEA: In the creation of humanity, God has put a unique handiwork on display that reflects Himself.

APPLY:

- **Question:** In the Judeo-Christian worldview, Genesis 1:26 has been a premiere biblical text for grounding the intrinsic value and dignity of each human being. In your own words, how would you articulate the foundational value of each person from Scripture?

- **Question:** When you read the account of the sixth day compared to the first five, did it appear to be different? Why or why not?

²¹ See Psalm 19 for reference to this stylistic literary choice made by the Psalmist.

²² In the original Hebrew structure, the account of Adam's creation is arranged in what is called a chiasmic structure to emphasize the importance of the word "image." Genesis 1:26 is theologically rich and literarily beautiful.

Week 3: Genesis 1:26-31

Day 3: Made in the Image of God

READ: Genesis 1:26-31

EXPLORE:

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*²³ It can be hard for us today to rightly appreciate how radically countercultural Genesis 1:27 would have been within the context of the Ancient Near East. At its core, the fact that both men and women were made in the image and likeness of God was an incredibly significant claim. In most of the ancient contexts, only royalty bore the image of God,²⁴ and as such, they were created with a unique distinctiveness above all others. The truth is, all men and women were made distinctively in God’s image. They were created uniquely among everything else that was made.

To be made in the image of God is to have certain spiritual, emotional, rational, intellectual, volitional, moral, creative, and functional qualities that are truly exclusive to humans. In a limited sense, humanity possesses a unique quality to express what God is like and, in so doing, He can uniquely reveal himself to us. It is important to note that the image of God was extended both to male and female.

The manifestation of the image of God in humanity should not be separated from human relationships. In a very real way, humanity reflects the image of God when we are in relationship with one another. Before creation, God existed in relationship within Himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It makes sense then that a fundamental aspect of demonstrating the image of God in humanity is found in communal relationships. It is important to note that although humanity is made in the image of God, we are not exact replicas of God.

²³ See Genesis 1:27 for reference.

²⁴ When continuing your study of this concept, it may be helpful to search under the Latin phrase “*Imago Dei*.”

At certain points in Christian history, theologians did not notice a difference between the two words used in connection to how humans were reflective of God. They are “*image*” and “*likeness*.”²⁵ They are certainly connected, but they are not synonyms. Since these two words are used in conjunction with one another in Genesis 1:26 we are meant to understand that Adam and Eve were made similar to, but distinct from God in the fullness of His character, attributes, and role. We were uniquely designed to know and reflect God. Although we can only scratch the surface of what it means to be made in the image of God, I (Stephen) pray that our study of Genesis will continually bring you to a place where your eyes are oriented toward God, your ears are open to His Word, and your life is willingly submitted to the One who made you in His image.

BIG IDEA: God made humanity in His image to uniquely know and reflect Him.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Does the way that you treat others reflect the fact that they are made in the image of God? Why or why not?

- **Activity:** This study only scratched the surface of what it means to be made in the image of God (*e.g., spiritual, emotional, rational, relational, intellectual, volitional, moral, creative*).
 - a. What would you add to the list above to explain what it means to be made in the image of God?

 - b. If you can't think of any additions, reflect on only one above and write down your thoughts.

²⁵ See Genesis 1:26 for reference.

Week 3: Genesis 1:26-31

Day 4: Connecting Sunday to Monday

READ: Genesis 1:26-31 and Genesis 3:17-19

EXPLORE:

Work is a gift from God, not a punishment for sin. This is an important truth visible in the biblical text which warrants our attention. Remember, before sin entered the world, God had already ordained a good work for Adam and Eve. Although one of the ramifications of sinful rebellion against God meant that labor would now come with difficulty and struggle, we are exhorted to look at work not as a punishment, but as a gift which preceded the fall of humanity.²⁶ This biblical reality may be challenging or even frustrating, but those feelings don't make the God-given ordinance of work any less true.

The best available research today estimates the average American will work 90,000 hours in their lifetime. Now, some of us might critically question the value of those hours and their results, but the sobering reality is you will spend a great deal of your life in what is classified as work. To keep it in perspective, the number of hours that you are projected to work equals a decade of your life working around the clock without any breaks. That is a long time! For those who have been redeemed by Christ and called according to His purposes, we cannot afford to neglect the spiritual nature of our work life.

Our ability to create, cultivate, and contribute intimately reflects the nature of God's image and it unsurprisingly matters deeply to God. As Christians, our work ought to be infused not only with an eternal mindset, but with a diligence that is befitting someone following Jesus. Before sin corrupted work and introduced pain

²⁶ See and compare Genesis 1:28-30 with 3:14-19.

into the process, God had given Adam and Eve a garden to work, a relationship to nurture, and a rhythm to maintain. He did not merely create humanity to enjoy work, but also to enjoy rest.

I (Stephen) have found in my own life, and in the lives of those whom I have had the privilege of knowing, that people often fall into one of two extremes. Some rest in order to work and some work in order to rest. The biblical approach is to live in rhythm between the two, doing each for the glory of God. Our later studies of rest will discuss this concept further, but the purpose of today's Word to Life is to remind you of the great blessing we have in Christ in seeing our work as glorifying to the King of kings. As believers, we ought to demonstrate the most diligence as we invest our lives and work with an eternity-minded intentionality and character. The unbiblical disconnect between Sunday and Monday should not exist in our theology and it should not exist in our work. Let's work as unto the Lord.

BIG IDEA: Work was designed as a gift, not a punishment.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Are you more tempted to the extreme of unhealthy busyness or lethargy?

- **Question:** How would you suggest a person could live in a healthy balance between work and rest?

Week 3: Genesis 1:26-31

Day 5: Who am I?

READ TOGETHER: Genesis 1:26-31, Romans 1:18-23

Instructions: *We believe that Biblical study and spiritual growth are meant to be shared. This Word to Life has that exact focus in mind. For some, Day 5 might be a good opportunity to lead your family in a devotional. For others, this study might serve as a simple reminder to tactfully communicate your faith with those around you. Regardless, Day 5 of each week is designed to help you grow in your faith by sharing it with others.*

EXPLORE TOGETHER:

Modern men and women are in an identity crisis. We do not know who we are. Men are confusing themselves for women and women are confusing themselves for men. Mental health and depression are at an all-time high. We continually deface the image of God in which we have been created. I (Sabino) cannot help but think what a balm of healing this passage would be to our lost world. In it, God teaches us many wonderful things.

First, before declaring what man would be, the Holy Trinity consults with one another. *“Let us make man in our image.”* This shows that God is affectionate towards man and that man is capable of a relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. God made us in His image after His likeness. This means that of all the creatures, we are the most like God. There is still an infinite distance between man and God, but man has a will, understanding, and active power. God gave us dominion, or authority, over the creatures. We are image bearers, and they are not. He made us male and female. This simple phrase, acknowledged and believed, would save the world a lot of trouble and heartache.

God commanded us to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. He gave us the whole earth to cover and cultivate. There is no part of the world that we could not multiply and in which we could not exist. God also gave us every edible plant yielding seed and fruit. God furnished the whole world and then created man. He could have created us on day 2 but our enjoyment of the world would have been far less, and we would have nowhere to sleep or stay.

God has given us all these incredible attributes and gifts and, as we know, we end up squandering them. This passage teaches us that modern people can know who they are and what their purpose is. We do not have to be left in the dark. God's Word brings light and life to a lost world. May we be His ambassadors to a lost and dying world!

BIG IDEA: Humans can know who they are through this passage.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** What are the differences between animals and humans that we see in this passage?
- **Activity:** List out as many attributes as you can of what it means to be created in the image of God.

- **Question:** This text tells us that God *blessed the seventh day and made it holy*. In your own words, what does this mean and why might it be significant throughout Scripture?

- **Question:** One of the instructions in Scripture that flows directly from this text is the command to remember the Sabbath day, rest and to keep it holy. What comes to mind for you when you think of godly rest?

Week 4: Genesis 2:1-3

Day 2: God Made it Holy

READ: Genesis 2:1-3

EXPLORE:

The six successive days of creation detailed in Genesis 1 ought to leave the reader with a resounding sense of God's magnificence. His power and intentionality are unavoidable in the biblical text. On numerous occasions, God pronounces His goodness in and over that which he brings into existence by His voice. It is important to notice not only how Genesis 2 continues in this section, but also how the text strikes a new and decisive note in biblical theology.

On the seventh day in which God *rested* from His work, we are introduced to the concept of holiness. We read in Genesis 2:3, "*So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it, God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*" It is interesting that after several references to the days of creation being "good" the day of rest is made "holy" by God. Moreover, this is the only usage of "holy" (*qāḏaš* in Hebrew) which occurs in the entire book of Genesis.²⁷ The theological concept of holiness, although introduced in Genesis 2, is more clearly laid out in Exodus.

Exodus 20:11 states, "*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*" Although we could only scratch the surface in one study, the theological concept of being holy pertains to being dedicated

²⁷ *Qāḏaš* (pronounced *kaw-dash*) is often translated into English as to sanctify, to make holy, to be holy, to prepare, to dedicate, or to consecrate. It is used consistently through the Hebrew Scriptures, but only once in Genesis.

or uniquely set apart for the purposes of God. From its earliest implications to its integration within ancient Israelite worship, the reference to the holy day in Genesis 2:3 has reminded God's people that there was not just a work to be done, but a creation of God to be remembered. Because of God's declarative holiness upon the seventh day, a theological foundation was built for purposeful days of rest and remembrance. It was a day which was set apart for intentional communion with and remembrance of God in His goodness.

At different times and in various ways, biblical history would remind us of the value of the work that remains to be done, but of the decisive act of God which needs to be remembered. As followers of Jesus who are living between the victorious resurrection of Christ and His second coming, we continue to implement the patterns which were instituted by God at the beginning of time. With great anticipation, we ought to not only participate in a work that was and is good, but we ought to eagerly remember the decisive victory of God in Christ alongside the rest that has been secured for us both here and into eternity for His glory.

BIG IDEA: The day of rest is designed to remind us that there was not just a work to be done, but an act of God to be remembered.

APPLY:

- **Question and Activity:** Biblically, holiness describes the act of being set apart from sin and being set apart toward God and His purposes. How do you think God might be challenging you to be holy (1) from sin and (2) for His purposes?
 - a. Be specific, spend time in prayer, bring in a brother or sister in Christ to help hold you accountable.

Week 4: Genesis 2:1-3

Day 3: Significance of the Sabbath

READ: Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11

EXPLORE:

After creation, we see God do something unnecessary: He rests. I (Josh) say “unnecessary” because God is all powerful and is incapable of becoming tired. God needs no rest. Yet, here we see that after completing His good creation, He does indeed choose to rest. Why does he do this? I would like to suggest and highlight the ways in which the Lord was setting an example for us in the rhythm of work, rest, and worship.

A DAY OF WORK

To start, we must remember that we are made in the image of God. God does work in bringing about creation and then creates man in His own image and gave him work to do as a part of his good design.²⁸ Adam is to subdue the earth, have dominion over it, and work the ground for his food. We often find ourselves complaining about work, but God determined that it is a healthy part of our existence to work to provide for our provisions and survival. In addition, the sluggard is rebuked and condemned throughout Scripture. We should work diligently and with excellence as a part of God’s design for our lives.

A DAY FOR REST

After working hard, we are encouraged and commanded to rest. This is known as a Sabbath, which means “*to cease*.” Often the Sabbath is associated with the restrictive regulations put into law by the Israel’s religious leaders. Jesus directly confronts this by declaring that He, being Lord over the Sabbath, insists that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So to Sabbath, or to cease working, for a day is good for us. It gives the opportunity to recover from a hard week’s work and prepares us for the week of hard work to come.

A DAY THAT IS HOLY

Though we see no command that Adam was to rest after seven days of work, we do see God provide this expectation when giving the Ten

²⁸ Genesis 1:26-31

Commandments in Exodus 20:8-11. In fact, the fourth commandment is given the more verses than any other commandment. God's people are instructed to follow God's example as seen in the creation account. Not only are they to refrain from normal work, but that the *"seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."* Though we certainly are expected to give every day to the Lord, there is something to be said about a designated day where we cease to consume ourselves with the works of everyday life, and give our attention to rest and worship.

In closing, I want to issue an imperative and then a warning. First, we must all Sabbath. We must all set aside a day that will look different than any other day. This day should be filled with rest and worship. Second, we should be careful not to do as the religious leaders in Jesus' day did and draw strict lines as to what this should or should not include. Jobs and workloads are not all created equal, which means rest and recuperation will not be the same for everyone. Each should resolve to Sabbath and then truly seek the Lord as to what the specifics of that day would entail. Though I would highly recommend we work to make our Sabbath on Sunday, the Lord's Day, where we gather with God's people for corporate worship, and then give the rest of the day to something restful, fun, and refreshing.

BIG IDEA: God models work and rest for us as an example. Sabbath is a good thing given to us that we might worship God well.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Do you have a set Sabbath day? If so, what day and how consistent are you in keeping your Sabbath.

- **Question:** What are some things that prevent you from establishing or maintaining a healthy and consistent Sabbath?

- **Challenge:** I (Pastor Josh) would like to challenge you to take the next four Sunday's as your Sabbath. Attend worship and then plan something each week that is restful and refreshing. After the four weeks, share with your LifeGroup how it has impacted your life and faith.

Week 4: Genesis 2:1-3

Day 4: Theological Points of the Genesis Prologues

READ: Genesis 2:1-3

EXPLORE:

Have you ever noticed that there are both benefits and drawbacks to zooming in? For example, it might be good to bring binoculars to a professional sports game, but they are not always helpful when you are trying to get a view of the whole field. One of the benefits of slowing down to study a specific Scripture multiple times is that it enables a person to notice some nuanced details. On the other hand, a significant disadvantage can arise when the passage which is repetitively studied is not seen within the larger story of Scripture. A good reading of God's Word will often lead you to study deep and wide!

The goal of today's study is to widen our biblical perspective on the theological points that are established in the prologue of Genesis. In short, Genesis 1:1-2:3 establishes some crucial attributes of God which will be expounded throughout Scripture. We need to see them today!

First, we are introduced to the concept of divine revelation. The creation narrative of Genesis, God is active, knowable, and immanent. Fundamentally, God, in and through His Word, has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity.²⁹ Second, we are introduced to God's eternal nature. Genesis is clear and the whole of Scripture affirms this central truth. As the uncreated and uncaused first cause, God is the creator and eternal in His nature.³⁰

Third, we are reminded of God's unique control and sovereignty. Certainly, the rebellion of Adam and Eve will present a decisive "turn-of-the-page," but the creation story of Genesis leaves no doubt about the uniquely unrivaled power and control of God. Unlike the other

²⁹ Read Romans 1:19-20 for continued reference to this concept.

³⁰ Read Job 38-42 and Psalm 102:25 for continued reference.

polytheistic³¹ religious systems in the ancient world, the Judeo-Christian understanding of the godhead consistently asserted that He was, is, and always will be unrivaled in His power and ultimate victory. Fourth, the concept of separation is an important concept which is introduced in creation. We need to remember that God separated light from dark and land from sea. This concept of separation was foundational the Scriptures and especially in Leviticus and Numbers for how God was desiring to separate Israel as His covenant people.³²

Finally, we need to notice how the Genesis prologue establishes the theological significance of God's blessing. You cannot read Genesis without being left with an impression of God as one who delights in and is magnified by that which He created. God's blessing marks nearly every sentence of Scripture's beginning.

BIG IDEA: The Genesis prologue establishes some theological themes which traverse the entirety of Scripture.

APPLY:

- **Question:** What were five theological themes discussed in today's Word to Life Study? If you list additional themes, what would you include?
- **Question:** It can be hard to study in a way that is both deep and wide. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
 - a. If you feel like you have developed a good habit of studying Scripture in a way that is both deep and wide, write down your practice to share with your LifeGroup.

³¹ Polytheism refers to a worldview in which someone believes in numerous different gods.

³² See Leviticus 20:24-25 and Numbers 8:14 for examples of separation being significant theologically.

Week 4: Genesis 2:1-3

Day 5: God Rested and So Should We

READ TOGETHER: Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Mark 2:27

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EXPLORE TOGETHER:

It is always an amazing feeling to complete a project. It may be repairing a piece of furniture, cleaning out the garage, closing a deal, finishing a paper or taxes. Completing a project and doing it well bring us pleasure. This is because we have been created in the image of God.

God's finished project and plan of creation brought Him pleasure. He did not rest because he was tired. The infinite God does not get tired. God rested because He was pleased with all that He did. He did not have any more animals to create for they would reproduce after their own kind. He did not have to create more plants or trees because their seeds would reproduce. He was finished. So, God blessed the seventh day (Saturday) and made it holy.

In this passage we are not given the 4th commandment, but many scholars have speculated that Adam the rest of the patriarchs were honoring the Sabbath before it was commanded in Exodus chapter 20. Regardless of whether it was practiced by the patriarchs, God gave man the Sabbath as a delight and to further his holiness and comfort.

On the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) we should make sure we set this day apart to worship God. God does not get tired physically, but we do. We also ought to set this day aside to rest our bodies physically so that we can be comforted and rejuvenated for the week ahead. On the Jewish Sabbath we see Jesus worship in the synagogue and practice deeds of mercy like healing. Our Sabbath also ought to be filled with worship and deeds of mercy.

You may be wondering how did the remembrance of the Sabbath move from Saturday to a Sunday. Well, the shift came from Jesus rising from the dead on a Sunday. God rested from His work of creation on a Saturday, and He rested from His work of redemption on a Sunday. On Sunday's, Christians ought to rest from their work and commemorate both the work of redemption and the work of creation. A day of worship and rest is essential to our flourishing.

BIG IDEA: A day of worship and rest is essential to our Christian flourishing

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** What are the spiritual benefits of corporate worship on a Sunday?
- **Activity:** Come up with a few godly disciplines or practices that you can do with your family on a Sunday. These can be spiritual deeds or deeds of mercy and compassion.

Week 5: Genesis 2:4-17

Day 2: Knowing God through His Nature

READ: Genesis 1-2 (Paying attention to the names used for the Creator)

EXPLORE:

As you read and marked the Creator's name, in Chapter 1:1 – 2:3 you probably observed God's exclusive name used as "God" or Elohim. Then, in Genesis 2:4-22 you may have noticed His name seemed to change exclusively to "LORD God" or the compound *Yahweh-Elohim*. Does this mean the Genesis account of creation is referring to two different gods and their accounts of creation? The answer, as we will uncover today, is certainly, "No."

I (Leeanna) would first like to draw your attention to the rest of the Bible and what it says about God. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"* Look what Isaiah 43:10 declares: *"...I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me."* Isaiah 44:6 confirms this with *"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me."* The New Testament also confirms this truth: *"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus."*³³

The two different Hebrew words used to reveal God in the creation account of Genesis describes different characteristics of our one true God. The author is wanting to emphasize the majestic and all-powerful, awesome Creator God, "Elohim" in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, God's character is revealed to His

³³ See I Timothy 2:5 for reference.

creation, as “*Yahweh-Elohim.*” *Yahweh*³⁴ is God’s personal name and reveals the desire of God to have a personal relationship with us, His special creation.

Another Old Testament name referring to God, Adonai, means “*my master,*” is also translated as Lord in English, but not with all capital letters. These two names translated in Scripture for the name of God (LORD Yahweh and Lord Adonai), can often be confusing. The context of how the name is used will help clear up any questions. Just as Elohim, Yahweh-Elohim, and Adonai, are names of our one true God, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Rapha, El Roi, Immanuel, and others, are also used, at times, to help us humans understand God’s nature.

We can be assured that the Scriptures clearly teach that our God is one, even when He is described by different names. There is no contradiction between the creation accounts, in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Genesis 2:4-22. Rather, we are given incredibly significant and different names which describe the attributes of God given to us.

Big Idea: The names of God given in creation are an often overlooked, but incredibly significant feature of the biblical text.

APPLY:

- **Question:** What did you learn about the character of God today?

- **Question:** How does this knowledge inspire you to worship and have a more personal relationship with your Creator?

³⁴ Yahweh is often translated as LORD in all capital letters in English translations of Scripture.

Week 5: Genesis 2:4-17

Day 3: Comparing Genesis 2 with Genesis 1

READ: Genesis 2:4-17 and I Corinthians 15:42-49

EXPLORE:

I (Stephen) don't know about you, but I was often thankful in school when a teacher would revisit a previous lesson or concept to explain it once again. In fairness, the review was not often given because they had done a poor job explaining. No, a good teacher will intentionally and with regularity visit a familiar concept or lesson not just to repeat themselves, but because there is a desire to provide increased clarity and depth. A good teacher will want their students not just to remember the content, but to truly understand it. If you are anything like me, you know how helpful it can be to review information from a new vantage point.

In the case of our biblical text this week, we have a reiteration of the creation story of Genesis 1 retold in a new and intentional way. Genesis 2:4-17 reintroduces us to and refocuses our attention upon the wonderful intentionality that is visible in God's creation of Adam. To this end we will ask the question, "What do we learn about God in His relationship with humanity through the creation account of Genesis 2?"

The first and arguably most pronounced theme that is developed is God's unique connection with humanity. One visual that is presented in Genesis 2 is the image of God breathing life into Adam. In this peculiar but crucial image we are reminded that humanity was and is sustained by the active presence of God. Genesis 2 and the surrounding theology that flows from it make it clear that humanity was created not only with an appetite for physical things, but for connection with God. Second, the creation of Adam involved him being fashioned in a natural body for an earthly existence. This concept, which is visible in Genesis 2, becomes incredibly important in I Corinthians 15:42-49 in the explanation of how Christ shared in an earthly, physical existence in order to secure a spiritual body of imperishable glory in the resurrection.

Paul writes, “⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”³⁵

In referencing Christ as *the last Adam*, the apostle Paul is intentionally pulling from profound truths which were revealed in Genesis 1-2. Ultimately, these truths were fulfilled in the sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection of Jesus. To God be the glory!

BIG IDEA: The creation story which is retold in similar, but distinct way in Genesis 2 communicates God’s unique and ultimately redemptive connection with humanity.

APPLY:

- **Question:** How would you compare the writing of Genesis 2:4-17 to Genesis 1:1-31?
- **Question:** How does I Corinthians 15 help you see God’s creation of Adam in light of what was accomplished in and through the life of Christ?

³⁵ See I Corinthians 15:42-49 for contextual reference.

Week 5: Genesis 2:4-17

Day 4: The Creation of Free Creatures

READ: Genesis 2:4-17

EXPLORE:

Sin is a rebellious distrust of God and His good design for humanity. At its core, sinful action is founded on a defiant desire for morality apart from God's leading. We certainly feel this defiance-filled tension within ourselves, in our world, and in the biblical text. In Genesis 2:16-17 we read, And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, *"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* The blessing of the garden was now met with a specific and clear prohibition in Genesis 2:17.³⁶

God had spoken and he had commanded Adam to enjoy the garden without eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One might wonder why God chose to place the forbidden tree within the garden in the first place. Why would God have placed an object of potential temptation and human disobedience in a creation that he had previously blessed?

Now, it should be stated that diligent students of the Bible have wrestled with this question and others like it throughout Judeo-Christian history. This does not mean, however, that we cannot have satisfactory answers to difficult questions. Fundamentally, God created an environment in which Adam and Eve in which it could be possible for them to disobey. Because God is described as love and love, by definition, requires choice, God willingly created humanity as significantly free moral creatures. God did not create humanity as predetermined robotic beings. Instead, as image bearers of Himself, God enabled Adam and Eve to possess the ability to choose. In this, they willingly refused His good design and embraced rebellion.

³⁶ See and compare Genesis 1:29 and 2:17 for reference.

We need to remember that even in though humanity rebelled in the garden and has continued to rebel throughout history, God knew that rebellion and disobedience could be redeemed by the grace of Christ and through faith in Him. Part of the beauty of God's plan for those who would repent and believe in Christ is that they would experience a restored life according to God's Word. Unlike our spiritual ancestors who rebelled in the garden of Eden, Christ literally embodied and exemplified a sinless life of willing submission to God's will.

In stark contrast to the rebellious way of humanity, Jesus showed us what it looks like to not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from God.³⁷ Christ has shown us what it looks like to delight in and be revived by the word of God.³⁸ When tempted, He did not falter. Jesus put the grace and truth of God on display. As we continue to read and study Genesis 2, may you be soberly reminded to repent of sin and rejoice on the sufficiency of Christ's life on your behalf.

BIG IDEA: The tree of knowledge good and evil is a reminder that God desired to creature significantly free moral creatures who, when given the opportunity to choose, freely chose to rebel against Him.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Confession is the act of agreeing with God about your sin and the state of your spiritual life. Spend some time in confession and repentance for the ways that you have distrusted God and His good design for your life.

³⁷ See Deuteronomy 8:3 for reference.

³⁸ See Psalm 19:7-9 for reference.

Week 5: Genesis 2:4-17

Day 5: Provision and Command

READ TOGETHER: Genesis 2:4-17

Instructions: We believe that Biblical study and spiritual growth are meant to be shared. This Word to Life has that exact focus in mind. For some, Day 5 might be a good opportunity to lead your family in a devotional. For others, this study might serve as a simple reminder to tactfully communicate your faith with those around you. Regardless, Day 5 of each week is designed to help you grow in your faith by sharing it with others.

EXPLORE TOGETHER:

A good parent provides for their children in the home and gives them reasonable commands to obey. A parent does this because they have given the child life and a command is a reasonable course of action following nature. We do this because we are created in the image of God. God gave Adam life, and he provided him with much provision and delights. He also gave him a reasonable command to follow as Adam was a man of understanding. And just as our children are unable to obey our commands unfortunately Adam was unable to obey God's commands even though he had an innocent nature and wonderful provision directly from the hand of God.

We first see that God was making the bushes and the plants to spring up without the normal means of rain and man to work the ground. Since it had not yet rained, God had his own sprinkler system to have the plants grow as mentioned in verse 6. God then describes how he made Adam. He formed him out of the dust of the ground. We were not simply made like the animals but "formed". This means that God took his time with us like a potter takes his time with a piece of clay. This should comfort but we must also remember we are but dust. Our bodies are made from

dust so we should not boast but we have been formed by God so we should be thankful.

Then God planted a garden in Eden. No doubt, God's garden was magnificent and He placed Adam there. Adam did not plant this garden. He was gifted it. God made the trees in the garden to spring up with delicious fruit so that Adam could have something to eat. God provided the food for Adam just like He provided the manna from heaven. The garden was well watered by rivers that flowed through it. This was a paradise and Adam was called to work it and keep it.

Finally, this garden had a unique tree in its midst, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was given a positive command that he could eat of every tree and he was given a negative command that he could not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If he ate of it he would become mortal and would surely die. Adam had more than enough provision that anyone could ask for and he had a simple command to follow from God.

BIG IDEA: Adam lacked nothing and only had to say no to one thing.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** Since Adam had no sin nature, what do you think compelled him to go for the forbidden fruit?
- **Activity:** Describe what you think the fruit tasted like in Eden and describe the experiences you think Adam had before the fall.



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