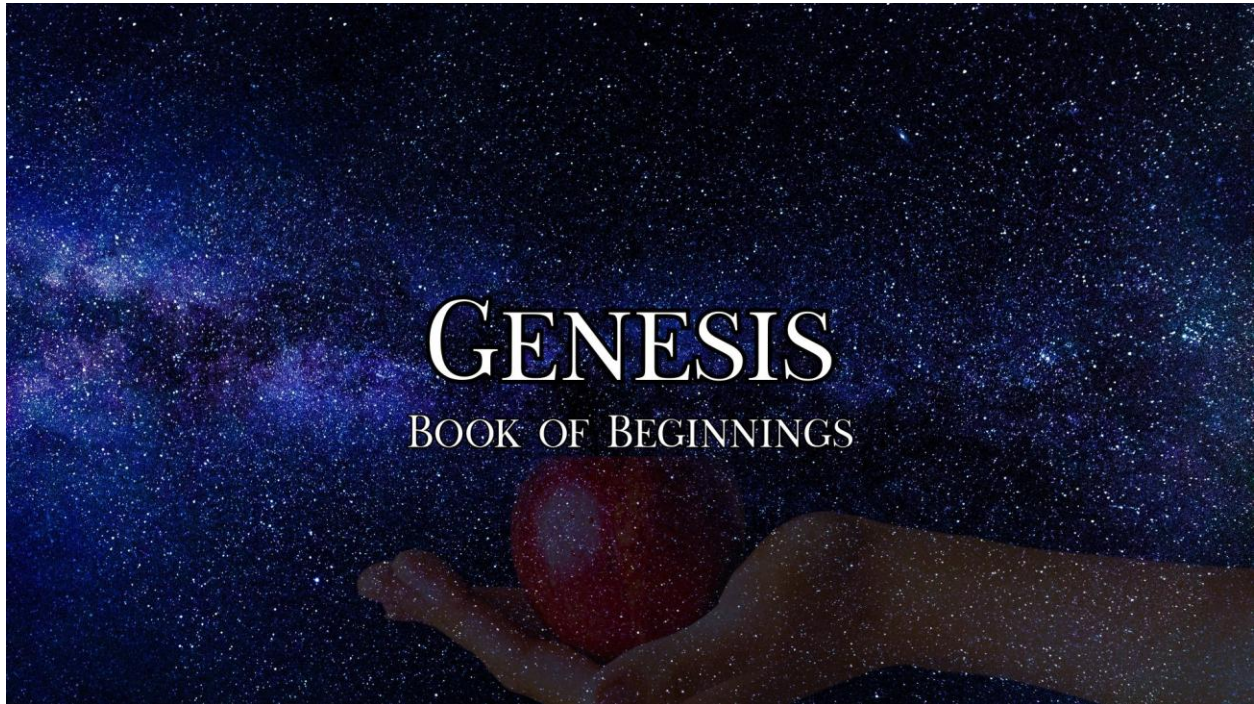


## Small Group Guide

### Genesis 2: Eden, Image, and Relationship



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#### Before You Begin

Open your time together by acknowledging the weight of the historical events referenced in this sermon. Invite group members to briefly share where they were or what they remember about September 11, 2001, or how recent acts of violence have affected them. Then transition by asking: "How do we hold grief about the world we live in alongside hope for what God has promised?"

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#### Key Takeaways

**1. The Breath of Life Is About Spirit, Not Personhood Through Breathing** When God breathed into Adam the breath of life, the Hebrew word for breath is the same word used for spirit. What separates humanity from the rest of creation is not biology but the fact that we are spiritual beings made in the image of God. Jesus mirrors this in John 20:21-22, breathing on his disciples and saying to receive the Holy Spirit, showing that just as the first Adam received spiritual life, we can receive new spiritual life through Christ.

**2. Eden Was Intentional and Distinct** Adam was created outside of Eden. God then built the garden and placed Adam in it. This suggests Eden was not simply the whole earth in its original state but a specific, intentional dwelling place God constructed for humanity. The call to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth may have been a call to extend the goodness of Eden outward, a mission that was interrupted by the fall.

**3. The Trinity Is Reflected in How God Created Humanity** God declared it was not good for Adam to be alone. This declaration points back to the nature of God himself. Because God is one being in three persons, he is inherently relational and communal. Adam, made in the image of a relational God, was incomplete in isolation. Eve was not formed from the dust separately but taken from Adam's side, sharing his essence while being a distinct person, a picture that echoes the relational nature of the Trinity.

**4. Marriage Is a Restoration of Unity** Eve being drawn from Adam's side and the later instruction that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife point to marriage as a rejoining of what was originally one. The husband and wife relationship, at its best, reflects the image of God more fully than either person does alone, and it is designed to draw both people closer to God and to each other.

**5. Shame Entered With Sin** Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed because there was nothing to hide. Full transparency before God and each other was possible in the absence of sin. The fall, which the sermon will address next week, introduced shame, hiding, and broken relationship. The hope of the gospel is the restoration of that unashamed standing before God through Christ.

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## Discussion Questions

### Opening and Observation

1. The pastor described the contrast between the evil commemorated that weekend and the perfection described in Genesis 2. How did that contrast affect the way you heard the sermon? What emotions did it stir in you?
2. What was something in this passage or the sermon that you had never noticed or considered before?

**Digging Deeper** 3. The sermon explains that God breathing into Adam the breath of life was about giving him a spirit, not about the first physical breath marking personhood. How does understanding the Hebrew word for breath and spirit together change the way you read that passage? What implications does that have beyond the abortion debate the pastor mentioned?

4. The pastor makes the case that God declaring it "not good" for Adam to be alone is rooted in the nature of the Trinity itself. How does understanding God as a communal, relational being change the way you think about loneliness, isolation, or the value of community?
5. The philosophical argument presented is that God, as the greatest conceivable being, must embody the highest form of love, which is communal love, and that this requires the Trinity. How does this argument land with you? Does it strengthen your understanding of who God is?
6. The pastor noted that Eve is the only creature in all of creation not formed from the dust of the ground but from Adam himself. What does it communicate about the design and dignity of marriage that the two share the same essence?
7. Adam and Eve stood before God naked and unashamed because sin had not yet entered the picture. Where in your own life do you find it hardest to stand before God or others without hiding? What does the gospel say about that?

**Personal Reflection** 8. The sermon describes how a husband and wife can either build each other up or tear each other down. Whether you are married, single, or somewhere in between, how does this principle apply to your closest relationships? In what ways are you building the people around you up or pulling them down?

9. The pastor acknowledged that some are called to singleness and that this is a valid and even powerful calling. How well does your community honor both the call to marriage and the call to singleness? Where might there be room to grow in that?
10. The sermon closes with the hope that Christ will return and restore what was lost in Eden, including access to the tree of life and an end to tears and sorrow. How does that future hope practically affect the way you face the darkness and evil in the world today?

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## **Practical Applications**

### **This Week, Choose One:**

- **Inventory your transparency.** Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas of your life where you are hiding, from him, from your spouse, or from your community. Take one small step toward bringing something into the light with a trusted person.

- **Invest in someone's dignity.** Identify one person in your life, a spouse, a friend, a coworker, and make a deliberate effort this week to speak words that build them up rather than tear them down. Be specific and intentional, not general.
- **Sit with the hope.** Read Revelation 21 and 22 slowly. Notice the imagery of the tree of life returning, of no more tears, of God dwelling with his people. Write down one way that future reality can change how you approach a current difficulty.
- **Explore the Trinity in community.** The sermon argues that communal love is the highest form of love and that it reflects the very nature of God. Reach out to someone in your church or small group who you have been meaning to connect with and make a plan to spend time together.

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### **Closing Prayer**

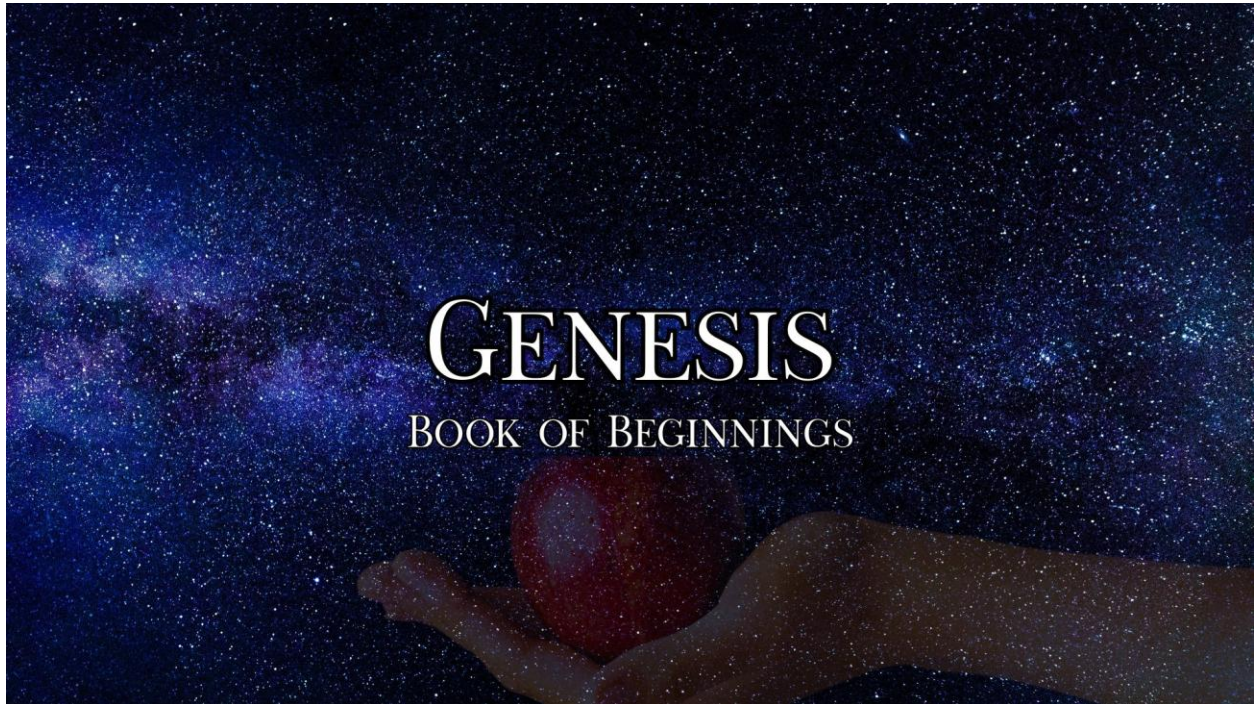
Close your time by praying together over two things: first, the grief of living in a fallen world that looks nothing like Eden, and second, the hope of what Christ has promised to restore. Ask God to help your group be a community that reflects his relational nature and builds one another up toward him.

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*Next week the sermon will address the fall and the temptation in Genesis 3. Consider reading Genesis 3 before your next gathering.*

## 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on Genesis 2 and the Themes of Creation, Relationship, and Redemption



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### Day 1: Made for More Than Dust Reading: Genesis 2:4-7

Devotional: You were not simply assembled from the elements of the earth. Every other creature shares your material origin, yet something decisive separates you from them. God breathed into Adam a spirit, making mankind alone among all creation a spiritual being capable of knowing, loving, and being known by God. In a world that often reduces human beings to biology, economics, or social function, this truth stands as a quiet defiance. You bear something no animal carries. That inward restlessness you feel, that longing that no achievement or relationship fully satisfies, is not a flaw. It is evidence of the spirit within you reaching toward the One who placed it there.

Reflection: Where in your life are you trying to fill a spiritual emptiness with something that cannot hold it?

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### Day 2: The God Who Builds Gardens Reading: Genesis 2:8-15

Devotional: Before God gave Adam a single responsibility, he built him a home. Eden was not a reward for obedience. It was a gift given before any work was performed. God did not

hand Adam a plot of bare ground and say, build something worthy of me. He planted a garden, caused rivers to flow through it, filled it with trees pleasant to the eye and good for food, and then placed man inside it. This is the character of God. He prepares before he calls. He provides before he commands. Whatever you have been called to today, remember that the One who calls you has already gone ahead of you into that place.

Reflection: How does understanding God as a preparer and provider change the way you approach what feels uncertain or overwhelming?

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**Day 3: The Image We Were Made to Reflect** Reading: Genesis 1:26-27; John 20:21-22

Devotional: God declared that Adam being alone was not good, and this declaration reveals something profound about God himself. A solitary God could only practice self-directed love, which is not the highest form of love. The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, exists in eternal communal love, giving and receiving within one divine being. Adam and Eve together began to reflect that image in a way Adam alone could not. When Jesus breathed on his disciples after the resurrection, he mirrored the act of Genesis 2, giving new spiritual life to those who would carry his image into a broken world. You were made to reflect a relational God into every relationship you inhabit.

Reflection: In what relationships are you currently called to reflect the self-giving love of God, and what would it cost you to do so more faithfully?

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**Day 4: Bone of My Bones, Nothing to Hide** Reading: Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 5:25-33

Devotional: Adam and Eve stood before God and each other fully exposed and entirely unashamed. Sin had not yet entered the picture, so there was nothing requiring concealment. This is the vision of what marriage, community, and our relationship with God were designed to be: complete transparency without fear of condemnation. The moment sin arrived, they reached for fig leaves. We have been reaching for coverings ever since, in our marriages, our friendships, and our relationship with God. The cross of Christ is the only place where full exposure before a holy God becomes possible again without shame, because the punishment that our exposure deserves has already been absorbed by Jesus on our behalf.

Reflection: What are you currently hiding, from God, from a spouse, from community, that shame is keeping in the dark? What would it mean to bring it into the light?

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**Day 5: Eden Lost, Eden Coming** Reading: Revelation 22:1-5; Romans 8:18-25

Devotional: The tree of life that stood at the center of Eden appears again at the end of Scripture. What was lost in Genesis is restored in Revelation. This is not coincidence. It is the shape of the entire biblical story, and it is the anchor of Christian hope in a world that produces the kind of darkness and grief that can feel impossible to endure. The evil we witness, the tragedies we carry, the divisions that seem beyond healing, none of it has the final word. Christ is returning to redeem what was broken and restore what was lost. The world you grieve not being is the world that is coming. Hold on.

Reflection: How does the certainty of Christ's return and the restoration of all things change the way you carry your grief and engage the darkness around you today?