

1.1

PURPOSE IN CREATION

LESSON BIG IDEA

I will develop a fulfilling relationship with God.

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God desires to have relationship with humanity.



FOCUS VERSE: Genesis 2:7-8

⁷ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

⁸ And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

LESSON TEXT: Genesis 2:1-9, 18-25



BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: Genesis 2:1-9, 18-25

As the first verse of the Bible declares, God created everything that exists. Someone suggested, “After Genesis 1:1, everything else is commentary.” As you read Genesis 1 and then continue into Genesis 2, you notice something interesting right away. The account of the creation of humanity is seen first in Genesis 1:26-28, but it appears again beginning in Genesis 2:7. The two records are not the same.

The first two chapters of Genesis do not describe different creative events. Instead, the second chapter focuses in greater detail on some of God’s work on the third, fifth, and sixth days. These include trees, birds, various animals, and people.

In general, the overview in Genesis 1 and the more detailed account in Genesis 2 present a bright and hopeful perspective of a glorious future worthy of God’s magnificent creation. The hint of a dark shadow falls, however, in the second telling.

Fruit trees are mentioned first in Genesis 1:11. The trees were a good thing (Genesis 1:12). So what is this about “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” in the second account of creation (Genesis 2:9)? Adam had just begun his 930 years on earth. Why the warning so soon about death? What did it have to do with this tree God had made to grow from the ground?

How can it be that God formed Adam of the dust of the ground and then evaluated His own creative work as “not good” (Genesis 2:18). As Genesis unfolds, we see God at work in humanity and that the promise of ultimate redemption would be fulfilled giving us power over death and hope of eternal life.

THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF GENESIS
DO NOT DESCRIBE DIFFERENT CREATIVE
EVENTS.

DAY 1

Bible Reading Plan

Genesis 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ | Matthew 1 ☐

Genesis 2:1-3

- ¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
- ² And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
- ³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Biblical Insight

The first verse of Genesis 2 reminds us of the first verse of Genesis 1. Although the KJV reads *heaven* in Genesis 1:1 and *heavens* in Genesis 2:1, the Hebrew word is the same in both cases. Genesis 2:2-3 shows the ending of God's creative work. He had finished what He set out to do, so God rested.

Daily Devotion

Have you ever driven around town on a chilly crisp Christmas morning? The streets look deserted. A beautiful stillness fills the air. It is the closest example of a sabbath rest we enjoy as a society. Yet the holy pause only lasts a brief moment before the hustle and bustle crash in again with the frantic pace of another year.

Rush wears out the soul. So our loving Creator invites us to celebrate rest. But this is not just any rest. It is God's rest. God's rest offers freedom from conflict, confusion, and cravings. God's rest provides peace, tranquility, and stillness. God's rest offers hope in Christ.

"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest" (Hebrews 4:9-11, NKJV).

Sabbath rest for the soul required the work of the Cross. Rest takes work. Today, "be diligent to enter that rest." Repent from the hurry and create space for God. It may be why God created the Sabbath, after all, so we would pause long enough to be with our Creator.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this to your life today?*

DAY 2

Bible Reading Plan

Genesis 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ | Matthew 2 ☐

Genesis 2:4–6

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,

⁵ and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

⁶ But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

Biblical Insight

The word translated *generations* appears ten times in Genesis (2:4; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2). Sometimes translated history, it expresses the idea of “a written record of past events” (Logos Bible Software). In Genesis, it marks the natural divisions of the book.

Why the need for a history of plants and herbs before the creation of Adam? Since there was no one to till the ground, the Lord God caused no rain. A mist provided moisture. To produce according to its potential, the earth needed humans to provide cultivation (Genesis 2:15).

Daily Devotion

Work. What images come to mind when you read the word *work*? Too often we feel overwhelmed at our job. We long for a break from the stress. So we plan vacations to escape. Or work reveals our shortcomings and how we never quite measure up. So we are driven but seldom content in our efforts. Work feels at times like an unruly taskmaster—not the gracious provision of our Creator.

Notice, though, God created work before sin disrupted His creative purpose. God’s desire is for us to find His pleasure in our work. Vocational holiness calls us to see work as a gift. “We are called to do good work as a means by which we bring glory to the Creator” (Gordon Smith, *Called to Be Saints*).

God’s creative purpose for work does not destroy us, define us, or rule us. God’s creative intent for vocational pursuits offers another opportunity to experience His joy. Today may you experience His joy in your work and find the strength to pursue His purpose for your life.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this to your life today?*

DAY 3

Bible Reading Plan

Genesis 10 □ 11 □ 12 □ 13 □ 14 □ | Matthew 3 □

Genesis 2:7-9

⁷ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
⁸ And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
⁹ And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Biblical Insight

In Genesis 1:26-27, we learned that God made humans, male and female, in His image and likeness. Now we discover additional detail. The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground. The word translated “man” is the Hebrew *adam*, commonly transliterated *Adam*. Since *adamah*, translated “dust” means ground or land, we could say this means Adam was an *earthling*.

No one knows for sure the location of the Garden of Eden. Because it was *eastward*, many assume it was east of the Promised Land. The names of the four rivers associated with the garden may confirm this vicinity.

Daily Devotion

In *Mortal Lessons*, physician Richard Selzer described a poignant scene in a hospital room after he performed surgery on a young woman’s face. Dr. Selzer carefully removed a tumor in her cheek, but to do so required severing a facial nerve. Now, her face would always remain twisted in paralysis. When he visited her bedside after surgery, she and her young husband held hands, awaiting his prognosis.

The young woman asked, “Will my mouth always be like this?” Dr. Selzer responded, “Yes, it will. The nerve was cut.” She nodded in silence. Her young husband smiled and said, “I like it. It’s kind of cute.” Then, her husband bent down to kiss her crooked mouth, twisting his lips to match hers. He wanted to show her that their kiss still worked.

When God formed humanity from the dust, He created us in the image of His holiness. Yet when sin destroyed our righteousness, our Creator did not turn away. He saw our brokenness and came close to reconcile us back to Him (II Corinthians 5:19). God showed us that His love still worked: “The essence of holiness lies in restoring God’s image in us” (Derek Tidball, *The Message of Holiness*).

Reflection and Prayer

» What can you do to apply this to your life today?

DAY 4

Bible Reading Plan

Genesis 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ | Matthew 4 ☐

Genesis 2:18-20

¹⁸ And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

¹⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

²⁰ And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

Biblical Insight

The only aspect of creation God declared “not good” had to do with the man being alone. Isolation is unhealthy. Adam needed “an help meet.” The words “help meet” must not be collapsed into *helpmate*. The two Hebrew words translated “help meet” refer to an essential helper, one Adam could not do without and who was equivalent to him.

Since we know how things turned out, it is somewhat shocking to see that God’s next step was to parade beasts and birds before Adam, giving him an opportunity to name them. None of these creatures answered Adam’s need for “an help meet.”

Daily Devotion

In *A Year in Treblinka*, Yankel Wiernikln shared heart-wrenching memoirs about surviving the holocaust. One memory occurred in a boxcar train on the way to the infamous prison camp, Auschwitz.

The Nazis locked Yankel and the prisoners in a boxcar for the night with no food or blankets. An older man from Yankel’s hometown happened to be next to him. It was deathly cold, and the older man was shivering. Yankel wrapped his arms around him and did everything he could to keep his elderly neighbor warm. Long, arduous hours passed in the bitter cold. Then morning came, and the sun finally appeared to warm the boxcar. But the sun’s light also revealed a horror. As Yankel looked around the car, all he saw were frozen bodies. No one made it through the night. Everyone died but Yankel and his elderly neighbor.

“The old man survived because somebody kept him warm,” Yankel explained. “I survived because I was warming somebody else.”

It is not good to be alone. “If two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone?” (Ecclesiastes 4:11, NKJV). Find someone to keep warm today.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this to your life today?*

DAY 5

Bible Reading Plan

Genesis 19 □ 20 □ 21 □ 22 □ | Matthew 5 □

Genesis 2:21-25

²¹ And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;
²² and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.
²³ And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.
²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.
²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Biblical Insight

Genesis 1:27 records the creation of the first woman. She is the “help meet,” Adam’s necessary equivalent, made from Adam’s flesh and bones. Adam said, “She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23). The word translated *man* here is *ish*. The word translated *woman* is *ishshah*, a feminine form.

Genesis 2:24 is a key to the subject of marriage. Both Jesus (Matthew 19:5) and Paul quoted it (Ephesians 5:31-32). The verse validates marriage as the formation of a new and permanent family unit characterized by oneness. In a marriage like this, there is no shame (Genesis 2:25).

Daily Devotion

The loving Creator placed humanity amid the garden. The garden provided everything humanity needed to flourish. Still, the garden would require careful attention to yield the benefits the Creator desired. Similarly, the loving Creator placed humanity in marriage to thrive relationally. Marriage was God’s provision for a relational void. However, it would still require careful attention to yield the benefits the Creator desired.

The health of marriages does not depend on big moments. Relationships live or die in the daily decisions of a couple’s life. Godly choices in private and purposeful efforts in public create an environment of grace for holy growth and maturity. The fruit of the marriage is simply the result of healthy personal decisions and intentional public commitments of faith.

If a couple is not seeing the fruit desired in a marriage, it is either a root or a climate issue. “Marriage,” as Paul Tripp explains, “is a sinner married to a sinner in a fallen world with a faithful God” (*Habits of a Healthy Marriage*). Careful attention to the private and public life will yield the desired results of the Creator.

Reflection and Prayer

» What can you do to apply this to your life today?

Lesson Title: Purpose in Creation**Scripture Focus:** Genesis 2:7-8.**The Lesson in Context**

The Word of the Lord that was given to the people of Judah through Jeremiah continues to give us encouragement and confidence for what God will do in our future. Jeremiah wrote God's plans for His people, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV).

God has a purpose in our existence and a wonderful plan for our lives. Out of all His creation, God chose us to fulfill His plan in this world. In the words of one of George MacDonald's characters in David Elginbrod, he said, "I would rather be what God chose to make me than the most glorious creature that I could think of. For to have been thought about—born in God's thoughts—and then made by God, is the dearest, grandest, most precious thing in all thinking" (*The Complete Works of George MacDonald*).

Considering all God has done and the great love with which He loves us, we should naturally want to develop a passionate relationship with our God.

Group Discussion

1. How did you derive your beliefs about our origin? Have your views changed over the years? Explain.
2. Is there something you have seen or somewhere you have visited that caused you to marvel at God's incredible creativity? Explain.
3. In what ways would people act differently if they believed in God as the Creator and as the moral authority over all humanity?
4. In what ways are we responsible for the Earth and its many creatures?
5. What is our purpose in the earth and what is our responsibility to God?

My Prayer for the Upcoming Week

How do you want to be different because of what you have experienced today?
