



Work on the Wild Side

The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-3

The first question for you and me is...

"What were God's intentions for mankind on planet earth?"

The next generation has been provided a pattern for their global world that began in Genesis and ends in Revelation?

The next generation should be encouraged by the writer of Genesis and his reminder of what God originally intended for humanity on this earth.

Too often we lose sight of God's original purpose as we become preoccupied with the "tyranny of the urgent."

The disciples during Christ's final conversation in John 12-17 understood what God's intentions were from their study of Israel's history. It was their personal history.

That history included God's creation, Adam and Eve's work assignments while in the Garden of Eden and "The Fall" resulting from their decision to "...be like God." Most of us in the 21st century need to refresh our understanding of these events.

We need a context for Christ's final conversation with His disciples. This discussion in John 12-17 took place just days before Christ's death and resurrection with His full knowledge regarding what was about to be fulfilled in history.

For example, there are profound implications of the realization that "work" came **before** Adam's and Eve's decision to "...be like God." Toil, not work, was the penalty for the "original sin" of Adam and Eve when they took control of their lives.

Several hundred years ago a Roman Catholic Priest named Martin Luther was reputed to have initiated the "Christian Work Ethic" by stating,

"Work to the glory of God whether you are a Priest or a cobbler."

Martin Luther dispelled the notion that we can separate sacred work from secular work. For a believer all work is holy.

The Apostle Paul was a scholar of the Old Testament and understood that the "new" Gospel that he preached was based upon a clear view of God's work with mankind as begun and described in Genesis. Paul understood the full meaning of Christ's words when he began to preach the Gospel, which Christ said was "...repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Matthew 4:17 Repent? Repent from what? Repent from the desire to "...be like God" or taking control of your life as well as your bad behavior.

But what does "...the kingdom of heaven is near" really mean practically? We believe that anyone who has Christ as His savior and has repented or given back control of his life to Christ and the Father will have access to all the resources of heaven to accomplish God's will in their lives.

So let's see what God says in Genesis.

God's original purpose will be described and discussed based upon its implications for us today. It is derived from the assumption that work is **NOT** the penalty for Adam's and Eve's decision in the Garden of Eden to "...be like God."

Exploring Genesis 1-3 will remind you that Christ:

- leads us to a unique relationship with the Father,
- challenges us to fulfill our "Original Commission" from the Father and
- restores the authority and power that God intended we possess to accomplish His "Original Commission" as well as the "Great Commission."

Lesson # 1

Overview: The Creation

At the end of this study, you will be very familiar with the first three chapters of Genesis. However, before we study these passages in-depth, it will be helpful for you to wrestle with the account of creation. Today, we will discover the 5 w's of creation.

Please read Genesis chapters 1-3 in their entirety, then make the following observations:
Who are the main characters in Genesis 1-3?

1. Genesis 1:1
2. Genesis 1:27
3. Genesis 2:22
4. Genesis 3:1
5. Genesis 1:25 and 3:22

What are the main themes of these passages?

1. Genesis 1:1-23
2. Genesis 2:4-25
3. Genesis 3:1-24

Where do the events of Genesis take place?

1. Genesis 1:1-2:3
2. Genesis 2:4-25
3. Genesis 3:1-24

When did this take place and over what time frame?

Why did God create the universe, earth and human beings? What is the mission of humans?

Notes & Questions

Lesson # 2

Creation: Days 1-3

Reread Genesis 1:1-13. Use these verses to answer the following questions:

According to Genesis 1:1-2, who existed before the creation of earth?

What did God create on the first day? What are the unique qualities that distinguish this new created universe from what existed before?

What did God create on the second day?

What did God create on the third day?

Why do you think God established the principle of "reproduction" or "reproductivity?" Explore the definition and implications of reproductivity. Notice how God takes time to explore and explain about vegetation and "seed bearing" in Genesis 1:11-12? What makes reproductivity such a powerful principle over the long-term?

Lesson # 3

Creation: Days 4-6

Reread Genesis 1, paying particular attention to verses 14-17 to answer the following.

What did God create on the fourth day? From your knowledge of science, why do you think that what God saw he made on the fourth day was "good?"

What did God create on the fifth day?

After this creative day, God blessed what he created. In Genesis 1:28, he gives this creation a purpose. List these purposes below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Bill Wilkie refers to these four purposes as our "original commission." What does "commission" mean?

What did God create on the sixth day?

1. Genesis 1:24-25
2. Genesis 1:25-27

What did God create on the seventh day? Why do you think that he did this?

Lesson # 4

Creation: "...in our image."

Now let's explore in more depth what happened on day six in Genesis 1:26-31.

Read Genesis 1:26. What does God want to do?

Read Genesis 1:27. What does God want to do? What model does He use for this creation?

Define and then explore the meaning of image and likeness. Does the term "...in our image" or "...in our likeness" mean the first humans were a perfect replica of God? Why or why not?

If it does not mean a perfect replica, what do the phrases imply?

Go back to Genesis 1:1. What does it tell us about the quality of God that He could have been replicating in the human race?

Think about what God did in the six days of creation. What do the six days of creation tell us about the qualities of God? Which of these qualities do you think were transferred to humans when he made them in His likeness?

So what do you think it means to you personally to be "made in the image of God?" How could knowing this affect how you live?

These passages indicate God's intentional desire to create humankind. How does this differ from other accounts you have been told about how or why humans were created? What implications does this have for the purpose of your life?

Notes & Questions

Lesson # 5

Creation: Our Mission

Having explored our likeness to God, let's explore God's expectations, role or mission for us described in Genesis 1:26-31.

What work did God have planned for men and women as described in the following:

1. Genesis 1:26

2. Genesis 1:28

- a.
- b.
- c.

Who was actually created according to Genesis 1:26 and who received the "orders from God?"

Genesis 1:26

Genesis 1:27

Are you a little confused? Welcome to the club. You are not alone. But let's focus on whether or not the mission that you discovered for all humans was given to just the man or to all humans including women. Which of the four functions **require** the participation of both men and women?

1. Be fruitful and increase in number

2. Fill the earth

3. Subdue it

4. Rule over...every living creature

Is there anything you have read so far that indicates this God-given mission would be only for males?

Lesson # 6

Mission: Man's or Everyone's?

Lets take a closer look at the four functions God charged mankind to fulfill and see whether it sheds any light on who was commanded by God to do what.

1. "Be fruitful and increase in number."
Which day did God establish the principle of reproductivity?

Look at John 12 and explain why the "kernel of wheat" analogy is used to describe and reinforce reproductivity for the disciples? How does this relate to God's principle of reproductivity?

Who fulfills this function?

2. "Fill the earth..."
How would the principle of "Reproductivity" help mankind to fulfill this part of God's "Original Commission?"

Who will fulfill this function?

In what ways can you fulfill these commands?

3. "Subdue it..."
Look up "subdue" and write out the definition. List some others words that have a similar meaning to subdue. Who should fulfill this function?

How are you subduing your world?

4. "Rule over...every living creature."
Look up the definition of "rule" and discuss the meaning of "rule over." Now look at the term from the perspective of a creator of this world who has delegated not abdicated the responsibility for developing this world. Who should fulfill this function?

How are you ruling your world?

Lesson # 7

Creation: Man

As we move onto Genesis chapter 2, it begins with the following statement:

"This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created."

Apparently, Moses, the author of Genesis, needed to explain in more depth the creation of Adam and Eve.

Genesis 2:7 describes in more detail the actual process God used to create man:

God ... _____.

God ... _____.

Man ... _____.

Breath of Life

The most obvious description of "breath of life" is that God gave life to an inanimate object made of earth. Gene Edwards, author of An Angel's View of Creation, hypothesizes in his fictional account that God breathed into man the "heavenlies." Man in the visible universe was the only created entity who could live in both the "visible and invisible" universes. He also implies that this breathing might be an important part of "creating man in God's image." It was much more than just breathing life into man.

What do you think God meant by the "breath of life?"

Lesson # 8

Creation: Garden of Eden

In Genesis 2:8-17 the Garden of Eden is described including Adam and Eve's role. Review this passage before answering the following:

What two trees did God place in the middle of the Garden?

- 1.
- 2.

As created beings, man and woman were not born as a child. Did Adam and Eve possess "full" knowledge at this time?

Where did God place man? What two roles did God assign to man in the form of work?

- 1.
- 2.

God indicated that man could eat from all trees in the Garden except one. Which one could mankind not eat from? What were the consequences if he did?

Why do you think that God did **not** give Adam & Eve knowledge of good and evil in the beginning?

Could mankind have eaten from the "Tree of Life?" And what does this tell you about God's desire for humans?

Lesson # 9

Eden: The First Problem

Some people believe that problems only began after the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden. However, if you examine Genesis 2-18, you may discover the first problem that God encountered in His relationship with mankind. Describe that problem when God said, "...it is not good..." as He surveyed His creation.

In Genesis 2:19-20, we have a description of another major work function for Adam. What special role was Adam given?

As they were scrounging the earth for a suitable helper and naming all the beasts of the field and birds of the air, what was God's conclusion in Genesis 2:20?

Describe the steps God took to solve the problem.

- 1.
- 2.

What was Adam's jubilant response to God's solution to the world's first problem?

Who leaves their family to become "one flesh?" What do you think it means to become one flesh?

Lesson # 10

Mankind: The Fall

Notes & Questions

Review Genesis chapter 3

Suddenly, a new character arrives on the scene in Genesis 3. Who is it?

What is the one quality that sets this character apart from the other animals in Genesis 3:1?

In Genesis 3:1 what question is asked of Eve? Examine this question. What was the serpent up to?

What was Eve's response in Genesis 3:2-3? Did Eve understand what God had said about the trees in the center of the Garden of Eden?

What was the serpent's immediate response to Eve's description in Genesis 3:4?

What was the serpent's longer response in Genesis 3:4-5?

What was the true temptation from the serpent in Genesis 3:5?

In Genesis 3:6, what did Eve think that she could **gain** from eating the fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil"?

Why do you think the serpent tempted Eve? What does this tell you about the serpent's motives? Who does the serpent really represent?

Lesson # 11

The Fall: Consequences

Reread Genesis 3

There are several consequences from Eve's and Adam's decision to respond to the serpent's challenge that they "...could be like God." Read Genesis 3:7-9. List the consequences of their decision:

The first consequence is _____.

A second consequence _____.

A third consequence _____.

God also describes specific future consequences. Read Genesis 3:16. What are the consequences for women?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read Genesis 3:17-19. What are the consequences for men?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The most serious by-product of Eve's and Adam's decision to take control of their lives is described in Genesis 3:22-23. What is it? Why is this consequence disastrous?

Did God ever withdraw the "original commission?" What does that imply?

Lesson # 12

Genesis 1-3: Issues

Notes & Questions

Armed with an overview of God's purposes and actions in the first three chapters of the Bible, you can now wrestle with some issues that have stimulated men and women for centuries.

God exhibits extraordinary creativity in Genesis chapters 1-3. After the seventh day when God rested, did God resume his creative activity? How does He expect restored disciples like you to manifest His creativity in your world?

Work is clearly **not** the penalty for sin. Work before the Fall was intended as a primary vehicle to fulfill the "Original Commission." Therefore, might work also be essential to fulfilling the "Great Commission" as well? Read Matthew 28: 16-17. How does this "Great Commission" from Jesus relate to the commission in Genesis? Check out John 17: 15-16. Why would Christ pray that God "not take them [disciples] out of the world...?"

Read God's charge to Noah after the flood in Genesis 8: 17 and 9:7. Think about the "Original Commission," Noah's commission, and Jesus' "Great Commission." What does God seem to be concerned about? Why do you think that is?

God never seemed to separate the sacred and secular. He exhorts Adam and Eve to live life to its fullest both before and after the Fall. Is your work or profession secular or sacred in God's eyes? Remember, Martin Luther, stated, "Work to the glory of God whether you are a cobbler or a priest." Is all your work or life a "work to the glory of God"? Why or why not?

How can you fulfill these commissions through your work?

From your analysis of Genesis 1-3, what is God's purpose for men, women and you in this world today?

Mankind's originally intended purpose as described in Genesis 1-3 is explored in the first of three study guides that

an executive recruiting firm in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He and his wife Carolyn now own and operate Still

Angeles. He is currently the President of Global Spectrum & the University Institute headquartered in Delhi, India.

Spiritual Benchmark Series

we have prepared for The Spiritual Benchmarks Series. This benchmarking guide has been prepared by Dr. Bill Wilkie. Bill was a faculty member and Special Assistant to the President at Michigan State University before joining the W. K. Kellogg Foundation staff and later entering the automotive industry as Executive VP of Multifastener Corporation. From 1987 to 1997 he owned



Waters B&B on Long Lake in Harrison, Michigan.

The second benchmarking guide is entitled "One with the Father" and is taken from John 12-17. It deals with Christ's final conversation with His disciples. The third benchmarking guide is the "Universal Disciple" taken from Colossians and created by Thom Wolf, a former Senior Pastor of the Church on Brady in Los

- **Armed** with an accurate view of Genesis and God's original charge to mankind,
- **Restored** to a relationship with God of power and authority to fulfill the Great Commission as well as the "Original Commission" and
- **Guided** by the tangible principles for daily living that the Apostle Paul taught the early Colossian Church

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