

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH CAFÉ: “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Lesson 2. (2:4 – 4:1)

Introduction: “Genesis” (“In the Beginning”) is a narrative description of the story of God. Chapters 1-11 provide the stories of creation, human origins, the “fall” of humanity, and the ensuing progress of evil – all against the backdrop of God’s enduring patience and love. Today we begin a 3 or 4 week review of chapters 2 and 3 – with each week devoted to looking at different aspects of these integrated verses.

Explanatory overview: Often we have a tendency to read Scripture in parts, often dissecting/examining verses individually, out of context. But, as Professor Rick Marrs notes in his book, *Embracing the Call of God*, p. 44, the literary style adopted by the author of Genesis, described as “Ring Composition,” strongly suggests reading chapters 2 & 3 together to get its integrated message. First, we see creation’s completion in Genesis chapter 2 (with “woman” as a culminating event!); then the unraveling of that design through deceit, and mankind’s willing subordination to the words of deceit in chapter 3. The progression reveals:

- (A) “This is the account (generations)...” (2:4)
- (B) The field is unworked – no one to till the ground (2:5-6)
- (C) Humanity is given life & installed in the Garden (2:7-17)
- (D) The man prefers human companionship over beasts (2:18-22)
- (E) The man calls his companion “woman” (2:23)
- (F) Summary – “therefore a man leaves... (2:24)
- (G) Human couple is “naked and not ashamed” (2:25)
- (H) Serpent promises – “eyes will be opened” (3:1-5)
- (I) Transgression (3:6) [*Fulcrum or turning Point*]
- (H). The couple’s “eyes are opened” (3:7a)
- (G) The couple experiences shame (3:7b-10)
- (F) Summary – “For you are dust” (3:19b)
- (E) The man calls his companion “Eve” (life-bearer) (3:20)
- (D) The man & woman wear skins of beasts (3:21)
- (C) Humans are expelled from the Garden and denied immortality (3:22-24)
- (B) Field work begins (3:23b)
- (A) The birth of a child completes one generation (4:1)

Read: Genesis 2:4 – 4:1 completely through. Given the literary structure above and the recollection of Scripture’s underlying premise that “how one views/images or pictures God ultimately defines one’s self-image and how one chooses to live,” recall chapter one’s description of God as “Creator” and the Holy Spirit as loving cherisher. Now note how Scripture depicts God as planter, builder, sculptor; then judge, punisher, redeemer. Re-read parts of chapter 2 to further discern God’s primary intent for His creation and the relationships He designed. Specifically:

- **Creation of “man”:** Re-read 2:7 and then compare the account to 1:26-27. What differs in the 2 accounts? Remember God “created” by His Word in chapter one. How is the creation of “man” (i.e., “mankind” or “adamah” – dirt or dust) depicted in chapter two? What significance to you attach, if any, to the idea that God formed “man/mankind” from existing creation?
- **Creation of “man” (part 2):** Re-read 2:18: What is declared “not good” by God? [Recall the contrast to 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25 where God declared some creation aspects “good” and one “very good” in 1:31]. Re-read 2:20b – 23. By what means and why does Scripture declare that God created “woman?” What do you conclude is thought by God to be “good” or “not good” in the 3 relationships presented: man – God; man – earth/created elements; man – wife/others? Are there hierarchical arrangements in the relationships, e.g., superior, inferior, equal? If so, what do you think they are and why?
- **“Boundaries”:** As was true with all of creation in chapter one, mankind is given vocational responsibilities and boundaries for living according to God’s design in chapter two. Re-read 1:26-30; 2:15-20, 24-25. What does God intend for man to be, and, consequently to do?
- **Key question:** Given all above, what do you think comprises “meaningful life” for mankind – life that maintains the full dignity and worth intended by God the Creator?