

Creation: Work Completed – Rest Established – Instructions Given

Scriptural References: Genesis 2:1-3, 15-17

Key Verse: On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. (*Genesis 2:2, NLT*)

Life Principle

God provided the template for humanity's relationship with creation: work and rest.

Introduction

"Every ending is a beginning" is a quote (author unknown) suggesting that endings can lead to new beginnings. In our text, "The earth and heavens were completed in all their array" (Genesis 2:1). Was this the end or a new beginning? God executed His crowning creation of humankind by making him in the likeness of Himself. He evaluated the creation of humanity not as merely good but as "very good." Humankind was the grand finale of God's six days of creative labor. This led to a new beginning, comprising the following: God made him a little lower than the angels; having intellectual abilities; having moral potential; being provided with all his needs; being charged and challenged to obedience; and the beginning of an opportunity for humanity to walk according to the statutes of God.

BIBLICAL EMPHASES FOR STUDY

I. Work Completed – Rest Established (*Genesis 2:1-3*)

Imagine doing great work and recognizing the phenomenon of being credited with the outcome of such a marvelous achievement. The carnal mind might be excited to gloat in the glory of the incredible feat you had accomplished. Often, we want to minimize God's actions and equate them with what we would do. God, however, upon the completion of the vast display of excellence in creating and equipping the heavens and earth, did not need to gloat. He assessed the creation, saw that it was good and very good, and established

rest. Chapter 2 of Genesis emphasizes *rest* as God's next concrete action after the completion of all creation. The day of rest was so valued by God that He blessed it (the seventh day) and made it holy. Exodus 20:8-11 reminds us in short that the sabbath day is to remain holy and sacred unto the Lord. Hebrews 4:1-11 warns that those who hear the word regarding the sabbath and fall short of its intentions should never enter God's rest. Unlike the physicality associated with the Old Testament Scriptures, the Hebrew text adds a component that requires resting spiritually in the Lord every day. Our obedience to His word is needed daily, and the reward is rest. The critical question is, how can every day be a day of peace and rest? The answer is, because of the finished work of Jesus Christ, every day can be a day of peace and rest when we hear and obey the word of God.

II. God's Instructions to Man: What to Do (*Genesis 2:15-16*)

God, in taking man and placing him in the garden, solidifies His total involvement not only in the creation of man, but also in the provisions for man. The reader can easily assess that God was establishing a relationship with man. The garden was a sanctuary where all of man's needs were met. It was a spectacular paradise. It was a place of peace and harmony as well as an intimate setting where the relationship between man and God could flourish. The peace and tranquility of the garden are undeniable. God granted man solace in the garden and gave him charge to cultivate and keep it. Not only was man to enjoy the provisions the garden offered, but he was also there to work the garden. God established the premise of 2 Thessalonians 3:10, where the apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and a work ethic. "If you don't work, you don't eat." Man was given dominion over the creations of God. He was to preserve, provide, and protect the land. In the garden, man was given liberties and liabilities. The critical question is, as Christians, do you have free will? The answer is yes, but we are expected to exercise freewill responsibly and to be guided by the Book of Truth.

III. Instructions to Man: What Not to Do (*Genesis 2:17*)

In the garden, man was given liberties and liabilities. He was free to eat from any tree in the garden, as depicted in verse sixteen. Verse seventeen continued the statement by including the word "except." There is a popular idiom: "For every rule there is an exception." In this case, God gave the rule and the exception. The combination established an absolute. Man was absolutely free to eat from all the trees in paradise except the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil. Therein lies the opportunity for man to make wise decisions or suffer the consequence of death. Along with free will came choice. Do I do as God has instructed, or do I rebel? Choice had to be a part of the equation because, without it, man would have no standard for showing loyalty and love to God. Man in this text had only one forbidden temptation. Today, we are constantly faced with numerous opportunities to sin. The writer of the book of Romans alludes to this: *When we would do good, evil is present on every hand* (Romans 7:21). That is why the Bible reminds us that every day is a day of choice. *Choose ye this day, whom you will serve* (Joshua 24:14). Joshua states that as for him and his house, they will serve the Lord. The critical question is, will you serve God or mammon? The answer can be found in Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters.” *Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

Conclusion

The text tells us that God, in creating man, made special provisions for him. In fact, man, initially did not have a want or need for anything. God also established precepts and boundaries. Man was given the freedom to make choices, and upon making the right decisions, he was ensured everlasting life. When we go against God’s boundaries, we forfeit the favors He has afforded us. Let us not set up our own will against the holy will of God. His will should always prevail.

Biblical Principles for Men

1. God established the seventh day as holy. Beyond church attendance, how do you maintain the sanctity of the seventh day?
2. God placed restrictions regarding the tree in the garden. How does that help us understand our limitations as Christians regarding free will?
3. Is there a parallelism between being a steward of the garden and our responsibility as stewards of the environment today? Explain.

Closing Prayer

God of all creation, thank You for making us part of Your creation. We pray that we continue to mature as Christians, that You may be pleased. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

The Origin of Sin

Scriptural References: Genesis 3:1-7

Key Verse: The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. (*Genesis 3:6. NLT*)

Life Principle

Sin is the willful disregard of God's instructions and the inclination to do one's own thing.

Introduction

The transition from Genesis 1 to chapters 2 and 3 is truly astounding, not because of the differences in detail, but because of the differences in the spirit and outlook of the man and woman created by God. After the magnificent act of creation in chapter 1, Genesis 2:4 through chapter 3 reveals a disobedient act that reduced humanity from its exalted status to a cursed one. God gave humanity liberties over all that was in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He did not hint or assume that humanity would understand what was expected. He expressly charged him not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. Humanity, who was created in the image of God, chose not to walk in the statutes of God. The Scripture reveals a vivid chronology of the fall of humanity: the serpent tempts, the woman sins, the man sins, and, finally, their eyes are opened to sin.

BIBLICAL EMPHASES FOR STUDY

I. Satanic Strategy (*Genesis 3:1-5*)

Chapter 3 begins with an unfavorable description of the serpent. Compared to God's other created beasts, he was the most cunning. His superlative craftiness also exceeded that of the man and the woman. The actions of the serpent were calculated, devious, and used as a weapon of deception. In this text, he is not referred to as Satan, but subsequent Scriptures clearly identify him as Satan, who appears in the form of a serpent (Isaiah 27:1; Ezekiel 28:13;

Revelation 12:9; 20:2). Speaking to Eve, he questioned her understanding of God's word. Satan often attacks by misrepresenting the word of God. It is a trick he even attempted with Jesus in the wilderness. Like Jesus, we must resist Satan's temptations with the truth of God's word. "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" His question to Eve was used to sow doubt and confusion. In other words, "Is this great God really denying you access to part of the garden?" Eve recited what God had told Adam with partial accuracy. The message we deliver about God must align completely with what God has said. We are not to add to, nor take away from His word. The integrity of His word must be maintained (Deuteronomy 2:4). God never stated that the tree could not be touched. Satan ignored the touched part of Eve's comment and focused on her last phrase, "or you will die." He convinced Eve that God was lying. He minimized the consequences of sin while highlighting its pleasures. Satan made the case for eating the fruit with three declarations: "You will not die. Your eyes will be open, and you will be equal to God." The critical question is, how is Satan enticing you today? The answer: Just as with Eve, he utilizes doubt, fear, deception, pride, greed, and the distortion of truth.

II. The Woman's Submission (*Genesis 3:6*)

According to 1 John 2:16, there are three fundamental struggles that men and women face in resisting temptations that do not align with the will of God. These worldly influences include the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, none of which comes from God. We see these struggles in Eve's response to her exchange with the serpent. She gave in to the lust of the flesh when she saw that it was good food. She gave in to the lust of the eyes when she recognized it was appealing and finally surrendered to the pride of life when she accepted that it would make her wise and equal to God. Jesus, to no avail, was tempted by Satan with the same three struggles. Jesus proves that even though Satan entices, we do not have to fall victim to his cunning ways. The serpent did not take the fruit and push it down Eve's throat. At the point where she ate the fruit, she was responsible for her own sins. The blame was not transferable. Eve also gave Adam the fruit to eat. The serpent tricked Eve, but Adam knew exactly what he was doing, leading to the fall of humankind. How do we overcome the traps of the devil? James 4:7 has the answer: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

III. The Realization of Sin (*Genesis 3:7*)

Sin has a cohort, a consequence. The most significant after-effect is the

separation from God. After Adam ate, the eyes of both were open to their sinful state. They knew they were naked. Literally, they realized they were not wearing clothes. Figuratively, their sin had exposed them to the ugliness of disobedience to God’s command. They attempted to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. They attempted to hide from God. They attempted to restore their innocence. Spiritually speaking, Adam and Eve saw that they were exposed and tried in vain to make a covering for their sinful lives. We likewise often try to cover up our sins, but like the cast of this text, the best that we can do in our own selves is as ineffective as the flimsy, easily ripped fig leaves used by Adam and Eve. The critical question is, what can wash away our sins? The songwriter has the answer, “Nothing but the Blood of Jesus” (Ephesians 1:7)!

Conclusion

It is prudent that we learn from the downfall of Adam that we must live in God’s created world on God’s uncompromising terms. God granted humanity the blessing of eating from any tree in paradise, with one exception. The one stipulation that God denied humankind access to was used as a carrot by Satan. God set the boundary and expected it to be honored. We must accept that autonomy has been granted, but choices that go against God’s order lead to dire consequences. An enriched life is one in which we avoid stumbling blocks and accept that our will does not supersede God’s will.

Biblical Principles for Men

- 1. God spoke directly to Adam. How does He speak to you today?
- 2. Is there a correlation between disobedience and disbelief? Explain.
- 3. Adam tried to justify his sins. Do you think there is ever justification for sinning? Explain.

Closing Prayer

Father of mercy and grace, we pray that You will give us a heart to walk in Your will. We ask Your forgiveness for our sins of omission and commission. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.


