

01

CREATION AND COVENANT

LEADER GUIDE


the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

ADULTS



FALL | 2024

GOD'S WORD TO YOU

A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel's behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God's people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and to restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ's work to the world. Empowered by God's Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. By God's grace in Christ, repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God's judgment and live joyfully in God's presence for all eternity. God's message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.

CONTENTS

The Three Roles Your Bible Study Group Needs	6
The Gospel Project Scope and Sequence	8
How to Use the Leader Guide	12
Creation and Covenant	16
The Doctrine of Scripture	40
Our Father Abraham	104
The Egypt Joseph Knew	138
Four Ways God Interacts with People	160
5 Tips for Praying Through Scripture	162

UNIT 01: FOUNDATIONS

SUGGESTED FOR
THE WEEK OF

	Memory Verse	19
Sept. 1	Session 1 God Created Humanity (Genesis 2)	20
Sept. 8	Session 2 Humanity Disobeyed God (Genesis 3)	30
Sept. 15	Session 3 Humanity Hates (Genesis 4)	42
Sept. 22	Session 4 Sin Corrupts (Genesis 6)	52
Sept. 29	Session 5 Humanity Rebels (Genesis 11)	62

UNIT 02: GOD'S PROMISES

	Memory Verse	73
Oct. 6	Session 1 Abram Obeyed God's Call (Genesis 12)	74
Oct. 13	Session 2 God's Covenant with Abram (Genesis 17)	84
Oct. 20	Session 3 God's Test of Abraham (Genesis 22)	94
Oct. 27	Session 4 God's Provision for Isaac (Genesis 24)	106

UNIT 03: STRUGGLES OF FAITH

	Memory Verse	117
Nov. 3	Session 1 Jacob Manipulated Esau (Genesis 25)	118
Nov. 10	Session 2 God's Promise to Jacob (Genesis 28)	128
Nov. 17	Session 3 God Was with Joseph (Genesis 39)	140
Nov. 24	Session 4 God's Test of Job (Job 2)	150

THE EDITOR

Welcome to The Gospel Project! We're glad you're with us as we start a brand new cycle of study. If you've been with us before, you might be struck by our brand new look and layout. What better way to start with the theme of creation than to create a whole new look and method to study through the Bible. What you'll still have is a chronological, gospel-centric study that helps you grow in your knowledge of how all of Scripture points to Jesus Christ. But you'll also see new graphics and new activity-based learning methods that will help you engage with Scripture and your group discussion.

It's fun to use our creative ability to explore different ways of studying Scripture as image-bearers of the creative God we worship. He began it all with His precision, creativity, and goodness. As we look at how God created the world good and how humanity's sin led to the brokenness of the world, we see a gracious God and sinful humanity as the basis of the gospel message. Studying the beginning of Genesis gives us how we got to where we are today and why we are all in need of a Savior.

I'm mesmerized by the mercy of God throughout these stories, growing up always thinking they were narratives of punishment and judgment. Yet weaved between the pain of the consequences of our own choices, God threads a message of hope, love, and rescue because of His patient compassion for His created beings.

As you study how it all began, may you "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity" (2 Peter 3:18).

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The Gospel Project for Adults

The Gospel Project®

Adult Leader Guide
Volume 1, Number 1 Fall 2024

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Printed in the United States of America

The Gospel Project®: Adult Leader Guide (ISSN 2163-0917; Item 005438061) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2024 Lifeway Christian Resources.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review Lifeway's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

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THE THREE ROLES YOUR BIBLE STUDY GROUP NEEDS

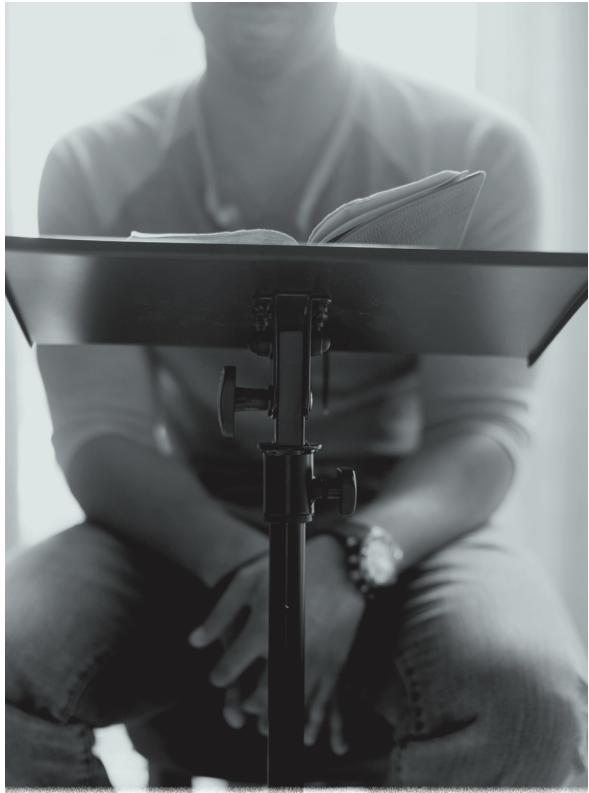
By Dwayne McCrary



For me, nearly forty years of marriage has meant wearing many hats, including, but not limited to, plumber, exterminator, cook, mover, and petroleum exchange engineer (better known as filler of the gas tanks). None of these titles were explicitly included in our wedding vows. The key word is explicitly, since they're covered under words and phrases like "cherish," "for better or worse," and "I pledge my word." The other hats come with wearing the ring.

Accepting the responsibility of leading an ongoing Bible study group may come with a variety of hats as well; some of them are expected, but not all. Walking alongside a grieving class member as he or she buries a loved one, especially a child or spouse, probably wasn't what we thought about when we said yes to leadership. Nor was setting up chairs or training another person to do what we do. Even if we didn't fully grasp it at the time we signed on to lead, these things come with the territory.

Ten years ago, in their book *3 Roles for Guiding Groups*, David Francis and Ken Braddy defined the roles we play when assigned a leadership position in a Bible study group as teacher, shepherd, and leader. (You can download a free copy of their original work at www.lifeway.com/trainingresources.) These three roles can help us handle the expectations that come with saying yes to leading a Bible study group.



TEACHER

This role is the most obvious. Regardless of what else we may think we're to do, teaching seems to be at the top of the list. Francis and Braddy define this role as our ongoing goal of guiding group members to discover and apply biblical truth. They say that for this to happen, group members need to talk as much as we do.



The phrase “ongoing goal” stands out. The idea here is that we do this task week in and week out. We aren’t coordinators or part-time teachers; we’re to be regular in carrying out this role. As a teacher of preschoolers as well as adults, I understand the value of being present every week. Preschoolers get accustomed to the patterns we follow. Seeing the same face each week eases some of their angst when they’re dropped off by a parent. Patterns bring security and give the child a framework for the learning experience. The same is true when teaching adults. They also need that same type of framework and security. We may hand over the teaching role to an apprentice on occasion, but ultimately, we’re the ones who must consistently fulfill the teacher role if we want the class or group to gel and become a safe place to share and learn.

SHEPHERD

Most likely, before your first day leading a class or group, you were presented with a ministry list of people assigned to your group. This ministry list was assigned with the idea that you would care for the individuals on that list.

Teaching and shepherding seem to go hand in hand. If we think about our favorite teachers over the years, we most likely identify people who also had some type of relationship with us. As shepherds, we know the needs of our individual sheep, which should make us better teachers. We can tailor the group Bible study time in light of these known needs. Our shepherding should also influence how we lead our group time, knowing whom we can call on to share an experience that illustrates the main point being examined.

We may naturally find it easier to shepherd those who attend our group more regularly. But we can’t forget those who rarely or never attend. There’s a reason they’re on the ministry list assigned to us. In a triad of parables, Jesus pointed to a lost sheep, lost coin, and lost or prodigal son (Luke 15). Jesus pointed out the shepherd will search for that single lost sheep until it’s found. We’re responsible as shepherds assigned to a specific number of sheep who also have names.

LEADER

Teaching and shepherding automatically give us influence, and we become leaders by proxy. We see this in how we help our classes or groups understand the mission of reaching, teaching, and serving.

Ongoing Bible study groups carry some responsibility in reaching people who are far from God. As leaders, we have to keep reminding our groups of that responsibility. Otherwise, we’ll become comfortable with our Christian huddles to the exclusion of others. As we reach more and more people, there comes a point when we’re unable to teach and shepherd effectively. That’s one reason to plant a new group once twelve to eighteen people are attending your current one. Someone must lead the group to recognize the need to plant a new group and apprentice others who can teach/shepherd/lead. The more groups we plant, the greater the potential to reach our communities with the gospel, which is our ultimate mission.

GOOD NEWS, KINDA

None of us is gifted in all three of these areas; therefore, we need others to come alongside us if we’re going to be successful. This is good news, but with a caveat. The three roles are interwoven. We can hand off a role, but the three stay closely connected by assignment and also by relationship. All three require us to build relationships with the people included on our assigned ministry list. If we neglect one of the roles, the other roles will suffer. With God’s help, we can become the teacher/shepherd/leader that the people on our ministry list need and that our church needs to reach the communities in which God has placed us.

Dwayne McCrary is the manager of adult ongoing Bible studies at Lifeway.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The Gospel Project for Adults aspires to point to the gospel of Jesus Christ through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources that show how God's plan of redemption unfolds throughout all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. This curriculum provides theological yet practical studies that immerse your group in the STORY of the gospel, helping to develop a gospel CULTURE that leads to gospel MISSION.

GOSPEL STORY

Our aim is to help people see the storyline of Scripture, the thread from the beginning to end, that weaves God's plan to rescue and redeem His creation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL CULTURE

Our hope is that the message of the gospel saturates our understanding of Christ, increasing our joy in Him, helping doubters become believers who become declarers of the gospel.

GOSPEL MISSION

Our desire is to empower believers to live on mission, declaring the good news of the gospel in word and deed for God's glory and the growth of His kingdom.

3 YEAR PLAN

(YEAR 1)

**VOL 01:
CREATION AND COVENANT**

•
Genesis; Job
Fall 2024

**VOL 02:
LAW AND LIFE**

•
Exodus–Deuteronomy
Winter 2024–25

**VOL 03:
LAND AND LOSS**

•
Joshua–1 Samuel
Spring 2025

**VOL 04:
FOOLISHNESS AND WISDOM**

•
1 Samuel–1 Kings; Wisdom Literature
Summer 2025

3 YEAR PLAN

(YEAR 2)

**VOL 05:
DIVISION AND DEFIANCE**

•

1 Kings–2 Chronicles; The Prophets
Fall 2025

**VOL 06:
PROPHETS AND PROVISION**

•

The Prophets; Ezra–Esther
Winter 2025–26

**VOL 07:
THE SON HAS COME**

•

The Gospels
Spring 2026

**VOL 08:
THE SON HAS AUTHORITY**

•

The Gospels
Summer 2026

3 YEAR PLAN

(YEAR 3)

**VOL 09:
THE SON HAS TRUTH**

•
The Gospels
Fall 2026

**VOL 10:
THE SON HAS RISEN**

•
The Gospels; Acts
Winter 2026–27

**VOL 11:
THE CHURCH HAS A MISSION**

•
Acts; The Epistles
Spring 2027

**VOL 12:
THE CHURCH HAS A FUTURE**

•
The Epistles; Revelation
Summer 2027

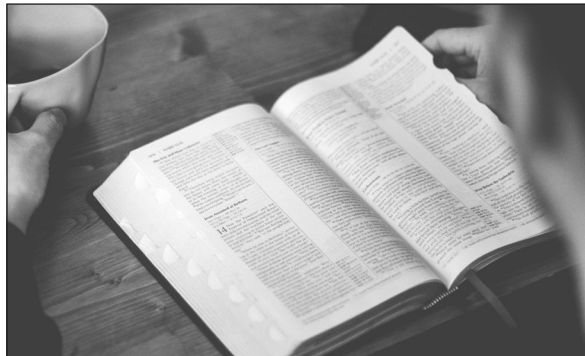
HOW TO USE THE LEADER GUIDE

The Leader Guide is an important tool in your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:

1) READ THE WORD DAILY

Begin each week by reading the Scriptures according to the Daily Readings. These Bible readings will help you mentally and spiritually prepare for the group experience each week while also building healthy Bible study habits for personal growth. The daily readings will help you understand the context of the Bible story for each week's session and fill in the gaps between sessions. The weekly psalm reading will help you think worshipfully and prayerfully about the story's place in the greater redemptive narrative of the Bible. And the timeline will give you a visual perspective so you can place the Bible story in the larger context of the Bible's storyline.

- **Daily Readings**
- **Chronological Timeline**



TIMELINE

The Eternal God Creates (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

Day 1: Light/Day and Night

Day 2: Seas and Sky

Day 3: Land and Plants

Day 4: Lights/Sun, Moon, and Stars

Day 5: Fish and Birds

Day 6: God Rested

SESSION STUDY: Day 6: Animals and Humans (zoom in with Genesis 2:4-25)

Daily Readings

☐ Day 1: Genesis 1:1-13	☐ Day 4: Genesis 2:4-17
☐ Day 2: Genesis 1:14-2:3	☐ Day 5: Genesis 2:18-25
☐ Day 3: Psalm 8	☐ Day 6: Psalm 148



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

21

2) STUDY FOR PERSONAL PREPARATION

The Personal Preparation section contains the Scripture passages that will guide you and your group to prepare for Bible study during the week before group time begins. A Bible study prompt will help you engage with the Scripture passage, but encourage your group to do more than what’s asked in the prompt. Space is provided for you and your group to add notes and questions and markings that will help you study the passage more deeply and see any nuances about the words and phrases of the Scripture provided. In addition to a brief commentary with thought-provoking questions to help you and your group dig deeper into the text, leader notes will provide you with additional nuggets for understanding the Scriptures. Use this Personal Preparation to experience what your group is experiencing as they study the week prior. Consider what questions, thoughts, or challenges they might have while engaging with the Scripture passages.

- Scripture
- Commentary
- Questions

Notes

PERSONAL PREPARATION

GOD CREATED HUMANITY AS SPECIAL AND WITH PURPOSE (GENESIS 2:7;15-17).

Circle the actions (verbs) performed by God in this passage.

7 Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.... 15 The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."

God created humanity in His image (Gen. 1:27), an honor bestowed upon nothing else. So we as people are unique and special amongst God's creation. For this we should be grateful. God created us and blessed us—we exist and are alive because God has breathed in us the breath of life (1:27-28; 2:7). And so, as God declared, it is good to be alive (1:31).

LEADER NOTE: Having the breath of life is not unique to humanity. The living creatures on the earth share in this as well (1:30; 7:13). We all breathe in and out. But only the man was said to receive the breath of life through a direct action of God—Him breathing into the man's nostrils (2:7). Life is shared by all living creatures, but humanity alone has the intimate connection with God of being made in His image and carrying His breath.

What are some ways you can use your breath to honor the God who created you in His image?

Before we let our uniquely created status go to our heads, let us consider our bodies. We aren't made of gold, silver, or precious stones. Rather, the Lord formed humanity from the dust of the ground (2:7). From this humble beginning, a body fashioned out of the dirt, then infused with the breath of God, humanity was elevated by God, first to life and then to a responsibility.

The Lord planted a garden in a place that we know as Eden (2:8), and He took the man He had formed and placed him in that garden for two reasons. One, to provide food for the man (2:16). The Lord created this man, and all humanity, with the need for food, and the Lord provided abundantly for that need in Eden. And two, God placed the man in the garden to work it and watch over it (2:15). This was to be the perfect realm for humanity's expanding rule as those made in God's image (1:28).

Notes

Key Concept: God created humanity for relationships.



LEADER NOTE: We typically view work as toil, a burden we carry to sustain ourselves with the fruit of our work, whether that be produce or pay. We only consider ourselves blessed in this regard if we have a job we love. But God intended work itself to be a joy and a privilege. God Himself worked through six days of creation (2:2-3), and He included the man in that blessing through his work in the garden.

Yet the man was to rule as a steward under the ultimate authority of his Creator and Sustainer. To ground this reality for the man, God raised up and identified one tree in Eden among all the other trees and commanded the man not to eat of that one (2:17). The consequence of disobedience would be death.

How can our work today reflect our status as stewards under God's ultimate authority?

CHRIST CONNECTION

First Corinthians 15:45-49 quotes Genesis 2:7 and makes an explicit comparison between "the first man Adam" and "the last Adam," or Jesus. The former is a man of dust, and we all take after his image, being descendants of Adam by birth. The latter is a man of heaven, and we will bear His perfect image through faith in Jesus crucified for our sins and raised again.

22 Unit 1 | Session 1 | God Created Humanity

23

13

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3) DIRECT THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

The Group Experience for each session includes an activity and interactive questions designed to be used in the group context to engage your group in active learning. The personal prep you and your group put into the days leading up to your group time will provide a richer discussion and more thoughtful theological applications to mutually encourage each other during your group time. The first page of the Group Experience will help you engage your group members as they arrive. Dialogue suggestions describe the context, transitions, and a recap of Bible readings or previous sessions to remind your group of what has already been studied or give a framework for where the lesson is heading. The second page gives a visual representation of the activity from the Personal Study Guide. A teaching outline helps guide your members through the activity and the debrief discussion.

Notes

GROUP EXPERIENCE

ARRIVAL

ASK: As people arrive for the group experience, begin by asking this ice-breaker question: What was a favorite creation of yours as a child, and why?

CONTEXT

SAY: At the beginning of the Bible, in the beginning of time, God created people as male and female to be His image-bearers in the world. This is a unique gift for humanity, especially since God is a spirit and does not have a body like human beings. Part of being God's image-bearers means we have responsibilities in this world—two in particular that we'll discuss today—and both of these can be spoken of in terms of relationship.

TRANSITION: Today, we will learn what it means that God created us for relationships. With whom do we have our relationships? How are they to function? Based on your Bible study this past week, we are going to chart the ways we were created to relate to God and others.

RECAP

ASK: What was one key idea that stood out to you as you prepared this week? Any questions that arose?

SAY: To prime the pump for today's study of God's creation of human beings in Genesis 2, you will remember that God formed the first man out of the ground and breathed life into him. Then the Lord placed this man in the garden of Eden, providing for him all the food he would ever need. But then God identified that the man needed something more—companionship—which resulted in the creation of the first woman from a rib the Lord took out of the man.

TRANSITION: From here, based on the Scriptures, let's chart out what it means to relate to God and others as we were originally created to do.



Listen to session-by-session training every week on
Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, or Spotify
ministrygrid.com/gospelproject • gospelproject.com/leader-training

26 Unit 1 | Session 1 | God Created Humanity



- Group Activity
- Interactive Questions
- Theological Applications

4) TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

After the recap of the activity, help your group take the next steps with the day's Scripture lesson by walking them through the Head, Heart, and Hands applications. Invite volunteers to share and discuss answers to the questions for their mutual benefit. Then take prayer requests and praises as you wrap up your group time. Space is provided to jot those down in your guide for prayer during the following week. And finally, guide your group to read and pray through the designated psalm, focusing your thoughts and words once more upon God's Word as you conclude the session.

Key Concept: God created humanity for relationships.

fellowship with others for the potential shame and guilt we may feel because of our sin. Yet God sent Jesus and raised up His church for a community of believers to find forgiveness, grace, and the joy of fellowship together.

What in your life leads to isolation? How can the community of Jesus in the church help you to resist temptation? To enjoy fellowship?

HANDS: God created human beings in His image to reflect His character in the world. We do this in part through our relationships and our work. God Himself set the precedent for both of these, being the triune God in perfect unity who did good work throughout the days of creation. How we work and how we relate should honor our Creator; these also become opportunities to point wayward human beings to our good God and to His Son who saves and restores us to His image.

How will you reflect God's image in your work and relationships with others this week?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Read Psalm 148, noticing how every aspect of God's creation should praise their Creator. Pray through Psalm 148 focusing on praising God for His work of creation.
- Reflect on your relationships and work to see how they align with God's design for humanity.
- Share with a friend how the gospel helps us fulfill our purpose as God's created image-bearers.

Invite volunteers to share praises for answered prayer in the past week and prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 23 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray with your group through Psalm 148:7-14 as you close.

Notes





- Application Questions
- Scripture-Based Prayer
- Prayer Requests

CREATION AND COVENANT

By Mike Brooks



Some of my favorite memories growing up are the times we spent piecing together massive jigsaw puzzles during visits to my grandmother's house on the weekends or over the holidays. We would scatter thousands of small puzzle pieces across the wooden dining room table, and as aunts, uncles, and cousins found opportunity during a quick visit, they would put a piece or two in place.

Some projects took a few weeks, others took a few months to finish. Yet one thing was certain—all of them would have been impossible to complete without one vital and often overlooked element. Every puzzle project was a non-starter apart from the puzzle box sitting upright at the table's far end as a consistent point of reference. The pieces could make sense because we could see the whole picture.

As is the case with thousand-piece jigsaw puzzles, so it is with the Bible—having the bigger picture in mind is a great place to start. When it comes to God's promises and His faithfulness to His people, we should always keep the bigger picture in view. In Scripture, we see evidence of God's covenantal faithfulness to His people from the very beginning.

CREATION

The book of Genesis records God's involvement in creation as well as His ongoing commitment to His people. In Genesis 1, we are reminded that God created Adam and Eve in His own image (Gen. 1:27; Latin "imago Dei"). God blessed the couple, and they were given authority to fill the earth and to subdue it for God's good purposes (1:28-29). In addition, Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden to live in it and were given the responsibility to work and keep it (2:15). Adam and Eve lived in a kind of covenantal agreement, serving as God's representatives, or "vice regents," in the world God created.

Adam and Eve's eventual disobedience in the garden ruptured their relationship with God. The image of God in Adam and Eve was still intact but was stained by sin. We are told the same is true for all who follow after them—including us. The world, once characterized by growth and flourishing, was now given to thorns and thistles. Where life was once promised, sin now reigned, leading all under its sway to certain death.

Yet in His kindness and according to His covenantal faithfulness, God did not leave Adam and Eve in death and despair. By providing clothing to cover their nakedness and their shame, God provided a way out. This was a sign of things to come in the fulfillment of the gospel. God provided for Adam and Eve and their family lineage a way to live and walk in freedom, out from the crushing weight of sin and disobedience.

“God’s faithfulness is the big picture making sense of this puzzle of sin, struggles, and suffering.”

COVENANT

Despite God’s kindness and mercy, His people persisted in rebellion. Yet as sin wreaked havoc among them, the thread of God’s faithfulness graciously remained. From Adam and Eve’s lineage arose descendant after descendant to whom God made and reiterated His covenantal promises.

Abraham, in particular, was called to be the first of God’s new people, and God established His covenant with him (Gen. 12; 15; 17). God promised to bless Abraham with many offspring and to be their God. In addition, He promised to bless them with a land. The narrative that follows showcases God’s sovereignty and grace as He remains faithful to fulfill His promises to Abraham.

God tested Abraham’s faith over the years and eventually blessed Abraham with a son Isaac, who would carry forth the family lineage and thus God’s covenant promises. Isaac too was blessed by God when his wife, Rebekah, gave birth to two sons, Esau and Jacob. The younger of the two, Jacob, was chosen by God as the foregoing representative and recipient of God’s covenant promises to His people.

Despite his faults (Gen. 25; 27), Jacob remained a focal point of God’s covenant commitment to His people. We are reminded through Jacob’s dealings with God that God is faithful to His promises even when we are not. In Jacob’s case, God granted him twelve sons who would become the tribes of Israel (Gen. 29–30; 35). Carrying forth a biblical pattern, and despite daunting obstacles, one of the youngest sons, Joseph, became a great leader among God’s people and blessed the entire world through his God-given wisdom (Gen. 37–50).

In addition to the creation story and the lives of the Old Testament patriarchs, the book of Job provides yet another window into faith lived out among God’s people. The life of Job, God’s servant chosen to be tested by Satan, offers a glimpse at God’s sovereign and merciful care amidst extreme suffering. Stripped of everything he held most dear in life, and despite persistent temptation to sin against God, Job maintained his faith and integrity through unimaginable trials. And God remained faithful to keep and uphold Job even in the midst of his suffering.

Through these foundational narratives of creation and covenant, we see that God’s presence and peace are not reserved for mountaintop experiences alone. God will be with us in the valleys as well. God’s faithfulness is the big picture making sense of this puzzle of sin, struggles, and suffering. And through it all, He is faithful to lay the ground work and to point us ahead to His promised solution and Savior—Jesus Christ, in whom God’s grace and love are steadfast and sure.

Mike Brooks serves as associate pastor at Hope Fellowship Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mike is interested in all things New England and holds a PhD in Historical Theology from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mike and his wife, Paige, reside in the Boston area.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 01

FOUNDATIONS



GENESIS 1–11



MEMORY VERSE

“Just as in Adam all die,
so also in Christ
all will be made alive.”

—1 Corinthians 15:22



GOD CREATED HUMANITY

CORE PASSAGE: GENESIS 2:7,15-25

CONTEXT

In the beginning, in Genesis 1, God created the heavens and the earth. In six days, God created the domains of sky, sea, and land and filled them with lights and living creatures. But for all the wonder of the created world around us and the universe beyond us, the Lord made human beings as the pinnacle of His creation. We were created, both male and female, uniquely in the image of God. The world was created for humanity and humanity for the world, a realm to steward together in God's name. And God declared it all to be "very good" in His sight. In Genesis 2, the Scripture zooms in on the creation of the man and woman God made in His image.

KEY CONCEPT

God created humanity for relationships.

As you examine Genesis 2:7,15-25:

- Identify how we ought to relate to God and others because of how God created humanity.
- Contemplate the changes that ought to occur in your life if you believe in the Bible's account of the creation of humanity.



TIMELINE

The Eternal God Creates (Genesis 1:1–2:3)

Day 1: Light/Day and Night

Day 3: Land and Plants

Day 5: Fish and Birds

Day 7: God Rested

Day 2: Seas and Sky

Day 4: Lights/Sun, Moon,
and Stars

SESSION STUDY: Day 6: Animals and
Humans (zoom in with Genesis 2:4-25)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Genesis 1:1-13

☐ **Day 4:** Genesis 2:4-17

☐ **Day 2:** Genesis 1:14–2:3

☐ **Day 5:** Genesis 2:18-25

☐ **Day 3:** Psalm 8

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 148



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

GOD CREATED HUMANITY AS SPECIAL AND WITH PURPOSE (GENESIS 2:7,15-17).

Circle the actions (verbs) performed by God in this passage.

7 Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being. . . . **15** The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. **16** And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

God created humanity in His image (Gen. 1:27), an honor bestowed upon nothing else. So we as people are unique and special amongst God’s creation. For this we should be grateful. God created us and blessed us—we exist and are alive because God has breathed in us the breath of life (1:27-28; 2:7). And so, as God declared, it is good to be alive (1:31).

LEADER NOTE: Having the breath of life is not unique to humanity. The living creatures on the earth share in this as well (1:30; 7:15). We all breathe in and out. But only the man was said to receive the breath of life through a direct action of God—Him breathing into the man’s nostrils (2:7). Life is shared by all living creatures, but humanity alone has the intimate connection with God of being made in His image and carrying His breath.

What are some ways you can use your breath to honor the God who created you in His image?

Before we let our uniquely created status go to our heads, let us consider our bodies. We aren’t made of gold, silver, or precious stones. Rather, the Lord formed humanity from the dust of the ground (2:7). From this humble beginning, a body fashioned out of the dirt, then infused with the breath of God, humanity was elevated by God, first to life and then to a responsibility.

The Lord planted a garden in a place that we know as Eden (2:8), and He took the man He had formed and placed him in that garden for two reasons. One, to provide food for the man (2:16). The Lord created this man, and all humanity, with the need for food, and the Lord provided abundantly for that need in Eden. And two, God placed the man in the garden to work it and watch over it (2:15). This was to be the perfect realm for humanity’s expanding rule as those made in God’s image (1:28).

Key Concept: God created humanity for relationships.



Notes

LEADER NOTE: We typically view work as toil, a burden we carry to sustain ourselves with the fruit of our work, whether that be produce or pay. We only consider ourselves blessed in this regard if we have a job we love. But God intended work itself to be a joy and a privilege. God Himself worked through six days of creation (2:2-3), and He included the man in that blessing through his work in the garden.

Yet the man was to rule as a steward under the ultimate authority of his Creator and Sustainer. To ground this reality for the man, God raised up and identified one tree in Eden among all the other trees and commanded the man not to eat of that one (2:17). The consequence of disobedience would be death.

How can our work today reflect our status as stewards under God's ultimate authority?

CHRIST CONNECTION

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First Corinthians 15:45-49 quotes Genesis 2:7 and makes an explicit comparison between “the first man Adam” and “the last Adam,” or Jesus. The former is a man of dust, and we all take after his image, being descendants of Adam by birth. The latter is a man of heaven, and we will bear His perfect image through faith in Jesus crucified for our sins and raised again.



GOD CREATED HUMAN BEINGS TO BE IN COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS (GENESIS 2:18-25).

Identify the three main scenes in this passage and briefly summarize each.

18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” **19** The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. **21** So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. **22** Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man. **24** This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. **25** Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

The constant refrain of Genesis 1 is “God saw that it was good,” describing various stages of His creative work. God even concluded day six with the declaration that it was all “very good indeed” (1:31). But before the “very good” was accomplished, a “not good” was first identified (2:18). The man God created in His image was alone. Certainly, the Lord was with him, but God knew the man needed “a helper corresponding to him,” someone like him who could be a complement to him, unlike a dog, cat, bird, or fish (2:19-20).

LEADER NOTE: The triune Creator God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is one God in three Persons in perfect unity and harmony. He has never been lonely nor lacking in perfect love. And from His nature of perfect community, God identified that it was not good for the man to be alone. Rather, the man should experience love and community with someone like him and yet distinct, in a way similar to the Trinity.

So God took a rib from the man and fashioned it into a woman, a companion who was like the man yet distinct and different, and she became his wife (2:21-24). For the work of tending the garden and multiplying to fill the earth, this woman would be the man’s “helper” (2:18). We must not classify this role as slavish or subservient but as a role of honor and dignity, one that reflects God’s image, for God Himself is called a “helper” in Exodus 18:4.

Key Concept: God created humanity for relationships.

Notes

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

MAN: Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation.

What are some ways God's people should honor God for the good gift of gender as male and female?

The first man and woman God created set the pattern for a husband and wife to join together and become "one flesh" in a relationship of love, sacrifice, submission, and respect (Eph. 5:22-33). The fruit of marriage was expected to be a family with children and then a community obeying the Word of the Lord. As a result of Adam's sin (Gen. 3), we don't always see these intended outcomes, yet the Lord remains faithful, even through childlessness, unintentional singleness, and loneliness. Through the love and sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, God has raised up a community in the church to love and help one another. And in the church, we are united with one another and supremely with Christ.

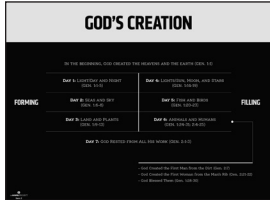
LEADER NOTE: It was and is not good for human beings to be alone. But a marital relationship is not the only means God uses to address loneliness. Marriages often produce children who grow up and get married, leading to extended families. And then there are friends, especially those who share in our fundamental beliefs, like the believers in our church. Jesus had friends, and He laid down His life for His bride—the church.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The exclusive relationship between husband and wife pictures the plan of God for Christ and the church to be united as one through the perfect sacrificial death of Jesus to cleanse us of our sins and make us holy (Eph. 5:22-33).

How can your group help others who feel lonely and isolated?

Notes



ARRIVAL

ASK: As people arrive for the group experience, begin by asking this ice-breaker question: What was a favorite creation of yours as a child, and why?

CONTEXT

SAY: At the beginning of the Bible, in the beginning of time, God spoke His creation into existence. (Use **Pack Item 2: God's Creation (poster)** as a visual reference for the days of creation.) He created the sky, the sea, and the land and then He filled those spaces. On Day 6, God created people as male and female to be His image-bearers in the world. What Genesis 1 tells in summary, Genesis 2 gives in detail regarding the creation of the first man and woman. Being God's image-bearers is a unique gift for humanity, especially since God is a spirit and does not have a body like human beings. Part of being God's image-bearers means we have responsibilities in this world—two in particular that we'll discuss today—and both of these can be spoken of in terms of relationship.

TRANSITION: Today, we will learn what it means that God created us for relationships. With whom do we have our relationships? How are they to function? Based on your Bible study this past week, we are going to chart the ways we were created to relate to God and others.

RECAP

ASK: What was one key idea that stood out to you as you prepared this week? Any questions that arose?

SAY: To prime the pump for today's study of God's creation of human beings in Genesis 2, you will remember that God formed the first man out of the ground and breathed life into him. Then the Lord placed this man in the garden of Eden, providing for him all the food he would ever need. But then God identified that the man needed something more—companionship—which resulted in the creation of the first woman from a rib the Lord took out of the man.

TRANSITION: From here, based on the Scriptures, let's chart out what it means to relate to God and others as we were originally created to do.



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GROUP ACTIVITY

CHART: Direct your group to page 22 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a table with the headings “GOD” and “OTHERS.” Recreate this table on a board in your room so you can record the group’s findings as they interact with the Scripture text.

Created for Relationships

Based on Genesis 2:7,15-25, how should we relate to God?
How should we relate to others?

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 2:7,15-17.

ANALYZE: Call for the group to identify ways we ought to relate to God based on this passage. Encourage them to ground their responses in the text. Record the group's conclusions along with the appropriate verse number in the table on the board throughout this activity. Encourage them to record these in their PSG as well.

DISCUSS: As necessary, prompt your group to discuss the following: What are some implications for the way we should relate to God based on the breath of life in verse 7? (*gratitude for our life*) Because we were made from the dirt in verse 7? (*humility*) Based on the mention of work in verse 15? (*faithfulness in our work to honor our Creator*) Based on the provision of food for the man in verse 16? (*remember our dependence upon God; thankfulness for His care*) Based on the presence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in verse 17? (*faith-filled obedience to God's commands*)

TRANSITION: Briefly summarize the group's conclusions regarding our relationship with our Creator God.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 2:18-25.

ANALYZE: Call for the group to identify ways we ought to relate to others based on this passage from Genesis 2, encouraging them to ground their responses in the text. For example: provide community for others (v. 18), honor the uniqueness and fundamental equality shared by all humanity (v. 23), honor the sanctity of marriage (vv. 24-25).

SAY: The primary human relationship in focus in this passage is that of marriage between man and woman, but that is not the sum total of our relationships with other human beings, which include children, family, and friends, to name a few. Some people do not get married, yet they were created by God not to be alone either. We all have a responsibility to contribute to community with others.

DEBRIEF

What insight did you learn from the input of others in this activity?

How does our relationship with God impact our relationships with others, and vice versa?

SUMMARIZE

Lead the group to review the key concept, inviting them to share ways today's group experience helped them better understand the relationships for which God created His image-bearers.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 23). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Head** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: Some people read the first chapters of Genesis and dismiss them as meaningless. Some read them as an influential legend or myth. But Christians and the church should read these as true history that grounds some of our most foundational beliefs. We were created for relationships with God and others, and how we enter and maintain those relationships will depend on what we believe about the creation of humanity in the beginning.

What are some ways your life should change if you believe in the Bible's account of the creation of humanity?



HEART: We've all experienced a sense of loneliness at times in our lives, and some have felt this more pronounced than others. So we can all testify to the truth of God's words that it is not good for human beings to be alone. But there are ways that we may intentionally isolate ourselves. In our sin, we can prefer the isolation of darkness. We may also fear the light of God and

fellowship with others for the potential shame and guilt we may feel because of our sin. Yet God sent Jesus and raised up His church for a community of believers to find forgiveness, grace, and the joy of fellowship together.

What in your life leads to isolation? How can the community of Jesus in the church help you to resist temptation? To enjoy fellowship?



HANDS: God created human beings in His image to reflect His character in the world. We do this in part through our relationships and our work. God Himself set the precedent for both of these, being the triune God in perfect unity who did good work throughout the days of creation. How we work and how we relate should honor our Creator; these also become opportunities to point wayward human beings to our good God and to His Son who saves and restores us to His image.

How will you reflect God's image in your work and relationships with others this week?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Read Psalm 148, noticing how every aspect of God's creation should praise their Creator. Pray through Psalm 148 focusing on praising God for His work of creation.
- Reflect on your relationships and work to see how they align with God's design for humanity.
- Share with a friend how the gospel helps us fulfill our purpose as God's created image-bearers.

Invite volunteers to share praises for answered prayer in the past week and prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 23 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray with your group through Psalm 148:7-14 as you close.

Notes

