



Time to Reflect

- How do we engage with other people? Do we treat everyone we meet like they are made in the image of God?
- Can we think of occasions in our own lives when we did not follow the leading of God? If we can, take a few moments to pray about these times and ask for God's forgiveness.

During the next eleven weeks we will look at a series of different Old Testament characters. There will be much to journey through so if you could have a look at the focused passage for each week, before the study, that would be helpful. As we look at the characters we will be reflecting on their experiences and/or character traits. We will be seeking to see what we can learn from each of them. This week we start our journey with Adam and Eve.

“At the instigation of the tempter, Adam and Eve – already made in the image of God (1:27) – seek to become like God (3:5), and the harmony depicted in chapter 2 is broken: sin, death and pain enter human experience.”

(Richard and Tricia Johnson, *Discovering Genesis*, pp32-33)

Character Profile

- Our journey begins with Genesis 1:26-27. These are important verses in terms of our own relationship to God and other people. We are made in the image of God and this is really significant.
- In his book *The Weight of Glory* (1949) C. S. Lewis argues that there are no ‘ordinary people.’ Everyone is precious in God’s eyes.
- As we enter Genesis 2, (v7) is an important verse. We see how God formed “...the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...” This verse challenges us to think about God, the giver of life.
- (v8-14) see our attention drawn to a very specific place: the Garden of Eden. This is a beautiful place and it is where the man is placed by God.
- As we read these verses it is difficult not to be impacted by the wonder of the Garden. God really did provide the very best and the man was given the task of caring for the Garden (v15).
- We see the theme of stewardship emerge once more here and it is further emphasised in (v19-20).
- (v16) shows how God provided for the needs of man but boundaries are established (v16b-17). This highlights the authority of God.
- God is concerned about the prospect of man’s loneliness (v18) and so woman is created to be a suitable helper (v18,21). The passage has a wonderful footnote in (v25). Nakedness was no

distraction or embarrassment! All that really mattered was the brilliance of existing in the utopia that was Eden.

- Interestingly, (v20b) is the first time that Adam is mentioned by name. Before we move on to Ch3 let us establish several lessons from Ch2.
1. Humans were made in the image of God. This should directly impact how we view other people.
 2. The gift of life is God-given.
 3. Humans were charged, by God, with looking after the world that He made. This challenges us to reflect on our role as stewards of the earth.
 4. (v25) speaks of marriage (man and wife) and there was complete happiness living in the Garden of Eden, following God's instructions, and enjoying relationship with God.

“God has provided everything that Adam and Eve need in the garden and now a test of their loyalty to God arises.”

(Richard. P. Belcher Jr, *Genesis: the Beginning of God's Plan of Salvation*, p71)

- The scene we approach at the beginning of Genesis 3 is wonderful. Adam and Eve are dwelling in the Garden of Eden: God's perfect and sinless paradise. What a wonderful place it must have been!
- Genesis 3:8 always strikes me as one of the most beautiful and troubling verses in the Bible. It speaks of intimacy, connection, and accessibility with God. It reminds us that God longs for personal relationship with us. Yet it ends with Adam and Eve hiding from God. They had disobeyed God (v1-7) and did not follow His instruction.
- An incredibly sad scene unfolds (v6), nakedness is recognised (v7), and the moment of truth beckons (v8-13).
- (v13) is particularly troubling. The words spoken by God are heartbreaking. **“What is this you have done?”** The perfect existence of Eden is fractured by sin.
- From here the serpent is cursed (v14-15), woman is cursed (v16), and man is cursed (v17-19). From this moment death has entered the world. But, even still, God provides for his people (v21).
- Ch3 ends with Adam and Eve being removed from the Garden of Eden. Before he sinned, man had worked in a beautiful and pleasant garden. Now he would have to work hard ground cursed with thorns and thistles (v18).
- What do we learn from this experience of Adam and Eve? Primarily, this passage challenges us to focus on growing deeper in our relationships with God. There will always be seasons of trial and temptation. At times like these let us turn to God rather than away from Him. Let us value the personal relationship that we can have with our Creator. Let us invest in this relationship.
- As our reflections on Adam and Eve continue we discover (Ch4) that they were parents. We will look at Cain and Abel in detail next week. For now, it is sufficient to say that Adam and Eve knew how challenging the role of being a parent actually is.
- Three specific sons of Adam and Eve are mentioned in Genesis – Cain, Abel and Seth

NEXT WEEK WE WILL BE LOOKING AT CAIN AND ABEL (Genesis 4:1-26)