

## **Genesis 2:4-24 — Foundations Lesson for October 7, 2018**

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### **[CONNECTIONS TO TODAY]**

It is not an overstatement to say that Genesis 2 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It gives us a glimpse into life as God intended it. As such, it sets the pattern for redemption, a model of what things will be like in the new world (the “re-genesis”). Thus, Genesis 2 speaks in broad ways to both the church and the world:

**Life and Freedom** — God intended us to thrive. He lavished our first parents with provision, good things of which they were free to eat as they pleased. Yet, we learn that true freedom exists within the restraint of God’s word. Transgression of God’s boundaries brings death.

**Ethics** — We see in Genesis 2 that morality and ethics are revealed by God (2:15-17). We learn how to live by paying attention to God’s Word.

**Human Dignity** — The gift of life is more than molecules and chemical interactions. God designed and blessed life. He fashioned humans, in particular, in his image and likeness. As such, we are complex and wonderful beings—physical, emotional, relational, sexual. We are social and spiritual—kings and priests.

**The Human Body** — The human body matters to God. The New Testament reminds us that God will resurrect all people on the last day (1 Corinthians 15). The human body should matter to us; we live life as embodied persons and should treat the body with dignity, including before birth and after death.

**Human Equality** — Every human being ever to live descended from these same first parents. Every human is the image and likeness of God. Thus, we ought to treat each with such dignity, without regard to physical differences (skin color, ethnicity, gender, age, size, location), social differences (economic class, intelligence, family of origin), or differences resulting from the curse (genetic malformations, disease) or sin (sexual orientation, religious beliefs).

**Work** — In both Genesis 1 and 2, God assigns mankind a task, a commission to fulfill. Work is not the result of the fall, it is a good gift to mankind to enjoy. Work-for-profit is not a primary concern in either the Old or New Testament. Rather work is an act of service, done to bless both God and neighbor.

**Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality** — God established marriage in Garden. This includes the gift of sex. Genesis 2 also sets the parameters for marriage. It is a covenant between one man and one woman, the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy.

The pattern of marriage is monogamous. It forbids polygamy, adultery, and pornography. Each of these aberrations introduce foreign flesh into a “one flesh” union.

Marriage is a heterosexual covenant between an adult man and an adult woman. As such, it forbids fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, pedophilia, bestiality.

**Gender and Sexuality** — We live life as sexual and engendered beings, embodied as male or female. The New Testament affirms the goodness of sexuality (1 Corinthians 7:1-5). It reminds us that we cannot separate bodily behavior from our worship of the Lord. Committing ourselves to one union excludes the possibility of union with another (1 Corinthians 6:12-16).

**Community** — “It is not good that the man should be alone.” That statement remains true today. God made us to live and serve him in community. Love for neighbor is inseparable from love for God. This speaks beyond the importance of local church membership. Loving our non-Christian neighbors as human beings involves fostering healthy communities.

## [GOSPEL CONNECTIONS]

Genesis 2 abounds with connections to the Gospel.

**Grace** — In Genesis 1-2, life is the undeserved, unearned work of God from first to last. God creates the first man and woman; they do not generate themselves. God creates the man outside his garden. He places man into the garden. Humans are aliens and foreigners, guests of grace, from the beginning. God is the provider of the habitat, the work, the food, and the fellowship. Every aspect of life comes from God's initiative. Humans do not deserve or merit life in any way.

**Life** — Jesus will appear as the source of life (John 10:10; 11:25-26; 20:22).

**Marriage** — Paul commends singleness (1 Corinthians 7). But, marriage remains an important aspect of life and Christian witness. Marriage, we learn, is finally about Jesus Christ and his bride, the church (Ephesians 5:31).

**Priesthood** — God fashioned Israel as a second Adam. Israel existed as God's son to serve him (Exodus 4:23) as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6). Though Israel failed, God's purpose did not. Jesus arrived as the perfect priest, who came to serve and to give his own life to ransom many (Mark 10:45). Those united to the crucified and risen Jesus through faith become a kingdom of priests to God (Revelation 1:5-6; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:4-5).

**Temple** — The Garden is lost in the fall. Israel's Temple is destroyed due to the nation's sin. Even so, God's purpose to have a sanctuary where he walks with his people continues. The incarnate Son—God and man—appears as the temple (John 2:13-22), the place where God meets man. He is torn down for our sin and raised again for our redemption. As the Holy Spirit dwells in believers, they become the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21). In the new world, there will be no temple, for God will be our temple (Revelation 21:22).

**Church** — God's redeemed community on earth is the church, gathered in local assemblies. In community with one another, we carry out our commission. The local church should be an essential part of every believer's life.

**A Better Land** — This present existence is not our final state. With the saints before us, we are looking for a better land, like Eden, prepared for us by God (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16). The final chapters of the Bible correspond to the opening chapters of Scripture. Revelation 21-22 remind us that God has not abandoned his purpose. A royal priesthood will dwell in a garden-paradise, partaking of the tree of life, and ruling the earth. Read these chapters and rejoice in our glorious hope!