



I N T H E B E G I N N I N G

WEEK 1 DEVOTIONAL: CREATION

DAY 1

I N T H E B E G I N N I N G

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*

GENESIS 1:31

R E A D G E N E S I S 1 : 1 - 3 1

Q U E S T I O N S

1) Who is the subject of Genesis 1?

2) In verses 3-31, what word(s) are repeated? What do we learn about God and His creation from these words?

3) When or where do you find yourself in awe of God's creation?

## DAY 2

# SCRIPTURE SUMMARY

*All Scripture is God-breathed...*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

## WHY READ GENESIS?

At some point in life, most people wonder “Where did I come from?” “Who am I?” “How did the world come into being?” Genesis answers those questions. The book of Genesis was written by Moses, but, it is likely that Moses was not the sole author. If you are familiar with the history of God’s people, you know that after 400 years of enslavement in Egypt, Moses led the people through the wilderness into the Promised Land. People whose identity had been that of slaves, experienced freedom when they left Egypt. They had a new opportunity to live into their identity as God’s chosen people. Genesis teaches God’s people about identity. It teaches who God is. It teaches how God’s people relate to God, and how God’s people relate to one another. The book of Genesis sets the stage for the storyline of the entire Bible.

## WHAT KIND OF WRITING IS GENESIS?

The ancients wrote differently from modern authors, so sometimes we have to do a little exploration to understand the full meaning of the story. Genesis 1 is sometimes read as if it were a science textbook. When Genesis 1 is interpreted like scientific writing, it can be difficult to explain apparent inconsistencies.

For example, plants were created on Day 3, but the sun was not created until Day 4. Why would God do that? Surely God knew about photosynthesis! How do you measure a “day” when there is no sun? Also, why does the author repeatedly write, “And there was evening and there was morning....?” It seems backward because morning comes before evening. When we read Genesis 1 as “scientific writing” we may find it difficult to understand.

Look at Genesis 1 in your Bible. Don’t read the words. Just look at how they are laid out on the page. Genesis 1 is poetry. It is exquisite poetry that is difficult to fully appreciate when we aren’t able to read Hebrew, the original language of Genesis. There are too many facets of this poem to describe in this brief summary, but here are a few things to notice:

1) **Repetition:** Hebrew poetry used repetition to create emphasis. Look for phrases like “And there was evening and there was morning” that are repeated throughout Genesis 1. These phrases are important.

2) **Organization:** Hebrew poetry used organization to draw attention to specific parts of the poem. Notice that Days 1-3 are about "separation" and Days 4-6 are about "filling." Notice too that Day 4 fills what was separated on Day 1. Day 5 fills what was separated on Day 2. And Day 6 fills what was separated on Day 3.

3) **Importance of numbers:** The number 7 is very significant in this poem. If we could read Hebrew, we would see that the first line of this poem has 7 words. The second line has 14 words (7X2). The phrases "It was so" and "And God saw" both occur 7 times. The word "earth" occurs 21 times (7X3) and the word "God" occurs 35 times (7X5). And there's more! The poem suggests that the 7th day is important. The description of the 7th day is found in Genesis 2:1-3.

But the point of studying Genesis 1 isn't to dissect this poem. A beautiful flower may be better understood if it is pulled apart and studied. But that destroys the flower and doesn't help us appreciate the purpose of a flower. The purpose of a flower is to offer beautiful shape, color and fragrance. A similar point can be made with Genesis 1. The purpose of Genesis 1 isn't to offer flawless Hebrew poetry that we can study. The point of Genesis 1 is to begin God's story. So, Genesis 1 is best understood when we look at it from a theological perspective, rather than a scientific perspective. The poem is intended to help us know God.

## W H A T   D O E S   G E N E S I S   1   T E A C H   U S A B O U T   G O D ?

Genesis 1 sets the stage by making it clear that the Bible is about God. "In the beginning, GOD..." God is the central character. God is creator, the giver of life. Genesis 1 offers a "theology of beginnings" to people who feel helpless and powerless. The God who created the entire world out of nothing continues to offer life--and is at work "recreating" even now.

In Genesis 1, the opening story in God's word, we discover the power of God's Word. "And God SAID" is repeated to emphasize that God is word (See John 1:1). In time, God's Word will become flesh and dwell among us (John 1:14) and God will speak "by his Son whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he also made the universe" (Hebrews 1:2). Although the name of Jesus is not mentioned in Genesis 1, the story sets the stage for his coming as the Word of God.

"And God saw that it was GOOD..." is another repeated phrase. Genesis 1 affirms the goodness of God's creation because God made it so. It is a dynamic goodness. Creation will change. God says "...be fruitful and increase in number..." But it is God's desire for God's creation to be good because God is good. So, when sin enters the world in Genesis 3 and creation is no longer completely good, God will take action to redeem and restore God's people and all of creation. That's the story of the Bible.

Stephen Covey is known for saying "begin with the end in mind." That's what the Bible does. Genesis 1 begins God's story—a story that will be told through the 66 books of the Bible and will conclude in Revelation 22.

## Q U E S T I O N S

1) Which perspective do you typically read Scripture with: scientific, poetic, or theological?

2) In Genesis 1 we learn that God is creator, spirit, word, and good. Which of these descriptors of God is most meaningful to you right now?

3) How does having the end in mind possibly change your perspective on Genesis?

DAY 3

G O D I S . . .

*In the beginning God made from nothing  
the heavens and the earth.*

GENESIS 1:1

R E A D G E N E S I S 1 : 1 - 2

Q U E S T I O N S

1) What do we learn about God from these verses?

2) Read John 1:1-5, Psalm 33:6-9, and Psalm 90:1-4. What do we learn about God's creation from these verses?

## DAY 4

" L E T T H E R E B E . . . "

*Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

GENESIS 1:3

R E A D G E N E S I S 1 : 2 6 - 3 1 , 2 : 1 - 3

### Q U E S T I O N S

1) On the sixth day, God creates man and says, "it was very good." (Gen 1:31) Take a moment for personal reflection. While there will be time later in this series to examine the existence of sin in our lives, in what ways does God tell you that you are "good?"

2) Does it give you a different impression of God to know that he rested? What do you think God did while he rested? Does that tell you how God wants us to utilize our Sabbath?

DAY 5

## G O I N G D E E P E R

*For his invisible things – that is to say,  
his eternal power and Godhead – are understood...*

ROMANS 1:20

R E A D P S A L M 1 9 : 1 - 4 A N D  
R O M A N S 1 : 2 0

### Q U E S T I O N S

1) Sometimes it is easy to get so caught up in the routine or the daily "grind" that we miss the blessings and majesty of God's creation. Can you think of some examples, either big or small, in which you experience the blessing and majesty of God's creation?

2) Where do you need to be more aware of God's creation? What steps can you take to make that happen?



# FOR GROUPS

## QUESTIONS

1) Most people are familiar with the story of Genesis 1. Yet, there is always a deeper place to go when we study God's Word. What did you learn about God this week as you read and reflected on Genesis 1?

2) Was there a time this week when you experienced the blessing and/or majesty of God's creation?

3) In Genesis 1:31 we read that "God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good." Do you believe that God's creation is still very good? Do you focus more on the goodness of God's creation or the existence of sin and brokenness?