

Lesson 2: Genesis 2, Creation, part 2

The Generations of Heaven and Earth

Genesis chapter 2 is not a second or different story from Genesis chapter 1. It is a continuation of that first story. Or we could say an expansion on the story to focus in on the creation of man and woman. We were told more generally in Genesis 1 that God created man, he created him male and female and he created him in his own image. Now Moses takes us back into that sixth day to learn more about this man and woman God has made.

The chapter division is not perfect. The first story ends at 2:3 with God sanctifying the seventh day and declaring a blessing over all that he has made. The second chapter of this story really picks up in Genesis 2:4.

Let's start by noticing a couple of words that may or may not show up in your translation of that first verse.

In my Bible, 2:4 starts off, "This is the account of the heavens and earth..." That phrase "this is the account of" is literally, "these are the generations of," or it could be, "this is the genealogy of." We will meet the word again many times in Genesis. The next time is going to be in 5:1, "This is the book of the generations of Adam." The word makes a lot more sense when used with a human being. The generations of a person are the descendants who follow that person. Here in 2:4 Moses is using the word stylistically to refer to the creation. The generations of heaven and earth are the story of heaven and earth. A close look at Genesis shows us that Moses uses this phrase to structure the whole book.

We are using a simpler structure in Genesis. This is the one we explained in our last lesson where chapters 1-11 cover four events with a focus on all humanity: Creation, Fall, Flood, and Nations. Chapters 12-50 cover four people with a focus on a special family: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. We are in that first event section, the Creation.

Genesis: Kingdom Prologue							
Key Passage: 12:2-3							
Chapters 1-11: Four Events				Chapters 12-50: Four People			
Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph
All humanity				One family			
Common Grace Kingdom				Special Grace Kingdom			

If we were to go slower and do a more detailed study of Genesis, this word generations (in Hebrew it's toledot), his word would stand out to us. It is possible Moses had available to him tablets with written genealogical records which he incorporated into Genesis. And this phrase, "These are the generations of," may have been used as an introductory or as a closing statement on those tablets which had lists of descendants. In Genesis, Moses uses 10 genealogical lists. Moses uses the phrase and following genealogy as an introduction to a new section of the narrative. Not all the genealogies are as important as others. The genealogy of Ishmael is not as important as the genealogy of Terah, Abraham's father but that may be explained by the fact that Moses wanted 10, which is a nice round, important number for sectioning off the whole book.

So, this is where you would find them. There is no use of the word in chapter 1:1-2:3, and then we get the first use in 2:4...

תּוֹלְדוֹת (tô·lē·dôṯ): genealogy

1. Introduction 1:1—2:3
2. The generations of heaven and earth 2:4—4:26
3. The generations of Adam 5:1—6:8

4. The generations of Noah 6:9—9:29
5. The generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth 10:1—11:9
6. The generations of Shem 11:10-26
7. The generations of Terah 11:27—25:11
8. The generations of Ishmael 25:12-18
9. The generations of Isaac 25:19—35:29
10. The generations of Esau 36:1-43
11. The generations of Jacob 37:1—50:26

That is just to give you an overview of how the word is used throughout the book. We are still right here at the very first one, still at the generations of the heaven and earth.

Our Questions, Not Theirs

In the day

Genesis 2:4 continues, “These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.”

This second part of the creation narrative in 2:4 starts very similarly to how we began the first part in 1:1. There is this broad statement about the creation of the whole universe, the heavens and the earth, and then a more specific focus. In chapter 2 that specific focus is going to be on Adam and Eve. Talking about Adam and Eve and the creation of the world brings up our modern questions of evolution and the earth’s age. The modern worldview that we interact with creates the questions that we want answered. Moses interacted with a different set of questions which his audience was faced with. He had to combat the worldviews and mythologies of the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Hittites and the Old Empire Babylonians. Whereas, we have to address new discoveries in science, secularism, modern paganism, new age spiritualism, our questions and problems overlap, but not always. Since Moses did not write to address problems with the age of the earth or evolution, those were not his problems. I do not want to spend a lot of time on those questions myself. That is not the focus of this story in Genesis chapter 2. Still, there is information for us here. And this are big questions for us. So, I am going to give some recommendations, and then I am going to move on.

Let’s start still in 2:4 with a second word that may or may not be translated in you Bible version. It is an important word for this discussion. The text says, “In the day that God made the earth and heaven.” The important word is day. Some Bible translations just say, “When God created the earth and heaven” without using the word day, but it is there in the Hebrew. It is interesting that chapter 1 describes the heavens and earth being made in 7 days, while this verse says, “in the day that God made the earth and heaven.” Here it is a singular day. How are we to understand the difference?

God defines the word day for us Genesis chapter 1 in verse 5. “God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.” Day in chapter one has a morning and an evening. A day there looks like a 24-hour period. There are some interesting observations to make, like, “What does it mean to have a day before the sun is created on day 4? That is interesting. But the narrative is pretty clear, there is an evening and a morning, a day. When it is light it is day, when it is dark it is night. We are supposed to read the days as days in chapter 1 and the day as an age or period of time in 2:4. And that is not a problem that is pretty much the straightforward reading of the text. And it makes the most sense. That does not mean that the interpretation will be the most straightforward interpretation or that there will not be meaning that is not straightforward. As we saw in our last lesson, the author intends us to recognize both a linear 7 days and a parallel pattern to the days. But the idea that it is being framed around literal days, that’s sort of obvious.

One thing we do know. Is that we have such a small amount of information here in regard to the creation of the world. There is so much I would like to know that I am just not told. So, I don’t want to focus on what I don’t know. I want to focus on what I can know. So, here some recommendations on what to keep in mind, considering the age of the earth and evolution while reading the Genesis history.

The Age of the Earth and Evolution

(1) Number 1: this story and the rest of the Bible do not allow for human evolution. Theistic evolution is not compatible with the Bible. First, our value as human beings is based on our having been created by God in his image. Second, the universality of both the problem of sin through the first Adam and the solution of atonement through the second Adam Jesus Christ depends on the reality of a sinless Adam and Eve who broke faith with God. You can see that point specifically in Romans 5:12-21, that is Paul's whole argument. When the Bible speaks about Adam and Eve, about human origins, where evil comes from, how the atonement works, the Bible treats Adam and Eve just as historical as it treats Jesus and the cross. The argument that God used evolution to create humankind requires a loose reading, even rejection, of certain biblical texts. And that's a slippery slope to start down.

(2) Number 2: The age of the earth is not as clear cut and dry as evolution. There are little things in the text that lead us to wonder and ask questions. Opposing sides both have answers for the perceived problems. I am only going to say here that the text allows some interesting observations. I am not even going to tell you what my opinion is. What I do not think we should do is bow under the pressure of a modern secular world view. Science does not define for us our view of origins or creation. If you believe in an old earth because you believe that science has more authority than the Bible, you have a problem. If God chose to create in 7 days he is certainly able to create in 7 days. What version of God doesn't believe that God could create in 7 days? And so, our determination about whether he did or not starts with revelation not with science. God's revelation has higher authority. And science is not so good with origins anyway. That is not the primary role of science. Which brings me to my third point.

(3) Number 3: Science claims to have the final say on truth. And many modern people give science that credit. There are lots of problems with that. Here are three problems with this. First, the truth statement that science is the best way to the truth about the world is not itself a scientific statement. That is a philosophical statement. To claim that science is the best way to give truth, that's not a claim that can be proven by science. So, you are having to trust something else for giving you the truth that undergirds your opinions about science, something besides science. It is a philosophical statement. So then, you have to come back to, "Where are you getting that truth from? Where are you getting your claims about science from?" The answer tends to be that we get it from our worldview or from our society. We do not actually have good, sound philosophical or logical reasoning for the claims that we make about science. Certainly, science cannot give us those claims. Second, good science is not always accurate. Scientists know that. That is the history of science. Science is a history of theories that give way to better theories. Science is supposed to be tentative. Third, scientific theorizing that does not practice the scientific method is not on the same level as science that is backed up by the use of the scientific method. The scientific method relies on coming up with a theory that makes truth claims which can then be tested through experimentation. Questions about origins and evolution resist verification through experimentation. We would need millions of years to run the experiments in order to verify most of the theories about origins and evolution. And just because science is really good at one thing, such as using the scientific method to experiment on our present day reality, that does not mean science is good at other things. That is the mistake that often gets made. Science is not necessarily good at theorizing about historical origins of the world and the human race. Science shines when it's using the scientific method to prove theories that can be tested, that's why we have refrigeration and iphones and have been to the moon. But claims about origins and evolution have moved out of the verifiable realm of science, which employs the scientific method, into the realm of historical or philosophical science. It is a theoretical realm of science. We need to be aware of that and regard those theories much, much more tentatively.

(4) Number 4: Science does not work when it bumps up against a creative miracle. Imagine that you were at a wedding, sipping wine, and it occurred to you that the wine you were sipping was the best

wine you ever tasted in your life. You ask the friend beside you, “How old do you think this wine is?” That friend happens to be a scientist and he brought his handy, portable lab with him. So, he runs a test on the wine right there and he says, “It is 12 years old. Science does not lie. I can tell you this is 12-year old wine.” At which point a third friend says, “Woah, woah, woah, you’ve got it wrong. Just one hour ago that wine was water. And then that man over there, see that guy over there surrounded by 12 other guys, he changed that water into the best wine I ever tasted.”

The problem with a creative miracle is that as soon as God creates something from nothing it has implied history. The newly created thing enters into the realm of space and time and is now subject to the laws of science, but science has no way of knowing the thing just come to be. Imagine you are a scientist, and you are there on the 6th day of creation. Let’s suppose Adam was created as a young man. And you ask the scientist, “How old is that guy?” The scientist might respond, “I can run a test, but from first glance, I’d say 21 or 22.” And then he could test Adam. And he could use really good science to test. And he could affirm his dating. But he would be completely wrong. The same thing happens when you wait for night to fall on that day. And Adam asks, “How old do you think that star is, the one ought there that seems to be the farthest away, it’s just barely flickering?” The scientist would need a way to test the distance of the star, but then he would be able to tell you how many millions of years it took light to get from that star to us, and that would give him the age of the star. Now that may be good science, it might be bad science, in this case, it is be irrelevant science. If God created the light to go along with the star he created, then both the star and the light, all the way from the star to the human eye on earth are only three days old.

And that is the problem with a creative miracle that science can’t know. If God creates something such that it comes to be and begins immediately to operate along with the laws of physics, then good science might determine the thing to be millions of years old whereas in reality it had only just been created.

And I know this question does not answer everything. It is more of a thought question. It is an illustration. I am suggesting to you that you start with God and his word. Science does not need to be an enemy of faith. Science often operates as an ally to the faith in the quest to glorify God through our ever-increasing wonder at what he has made. And yet, science has its limits.

What do we learn about the creation?

So, let’s move on from what we cannot know from this text to what we can know. For example, we are taught several significant truths about the creation itself. Moses helps our worldview come in line with God’s view of the world. Consider what we do learn.

The creation is not eternal. There was nothing. Then God made something.

The creation is not part of God. God is independent and distinct from what he has made. The creation is not his body. God is spirit, existing before the created world.

The created world was created good. The material world is not necessarily bad.

The created world is an environment made by God for people. People are more precious to God than the created world. The world is a gift. We are stewards of that gift. We are made in the image of God to reflect his rule over and care for the creation.

Now, turning our focus back to Genesis 2:4-25 and the creation of Adam and Eve, we learn more about our identity as human beings. So, let’s consider what we learn. As we go through the text, I am going to highlight four truths. These four truths have to do with work, covenant, intimacy, and gender.

Our Identity as human beings

We were created to work.

First, we were created to work. God has created the environment for man to live in, but he has not yet created man. Verses 5 and 6 describe for us the environment.

⁵ Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.

⁶ But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.

This text raises some questions for us, questions we can't really answer. But more importantly it sets the stage. We have land. And it is new land on which shrubs have not yet begun to grow. One thing especially is missing. Did you notice what that is? "There is no one to cultivate the earth." The environment is created for man and for the work of man, but he has not yet appeared. And then we have verse 7.

⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

God creates man and in creating him, he connects man to the creation by creating him out of the the creation, out of the ground. At the same time, God connects man to himself by breathing life into him. That word for breath is the same as the word for spirit. So, it is the Spirit of God entering into man to bring him to life. In verse 19 the text describes God forming animals and birds also out of the ground. So, like man, in the same way, they are also connected to the inanimate creation. But the text only speaks of God breathing into Adam. He is unique. He is the one created in the image of God.

God created the land and vegetation for Adam, and he goes further to create an even more special environment for Adam. He makes a garden, which includes fruit trees. He is providing food for Adam. He is also modeling for Adam the work of cultivation that Adam is supposed to take up. This is 8-10.

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. ⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So, we are told for the first time that there are two special trees. These are going to come up again in the next few verses along with more about the garden. Let's read that, verse 10-17.

¹⁰ Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

If the ancients were supposed to recognize the location of Eden by the naming of the rivers, then we have lost the knowledge they had. The 2nd generation out of Egypt would certainly recognize the two great rivers of Mesopotamia, the Tigris and Euphrates. You can find those on your Bible map or on Google Earth. But defining the other two rivers is really not possible. We can only make guesses. We have a guess of what Cush might be. But none work well. The land is very good, both fertile and full of beautiful stones and gold. Verse 15 tells us that God does not seem himself as Adam's gardener. God assigns Adam the role of cultivating the garden. And we expected from verse 5. We were waiting for somebody to come and cultivate it. And in verse 16 we also get the one prohibition made to Adam. He may eat of any tree, presumably that includes the tree of life. But he may not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So, what are we learning about ourselves? We were created to work. This is where that satisfaction comes from when we use our energy and abilities to do something worthwhile. We were created for that. We need this. Adam was made to cultivate the earth. God invited Adam into that work, creating

an environment in which his labor might be fruitful, and God even modelling for him the work to be done. In a minute we will see God inviting Adam into contact with the animals, to name them, which suggests both authority over animals and also knowledge of animals.

We were created in covenant with God.

There is something else here that we might not pick up on, but I believe Moses' audience would have noticed. We have here part of the covenant form that will be developed later, especially when we get to Exodus and Deuteronomy. So, we are created to be in covenant with God. This is part of our background kingdom motif. Remember the six things we need to have to have kingdom. We need a king and a people, a covenant and a mediator, a land and a palace or a temple, the place where the great king lives. We have all of these here. God is the king. Adam is the people or the beginning of the people. Adam will also be the mediator of the covenant, expected to communicate to Eve and to their descendants, their children. We have the land, newly created. And we have a temple in that Eden is our temple. It is the place that Adam and Eve experience the presence of God. We will see this temple pattern followed with the tabernacle which is going to be created to look back towards Eden. I believe also we have the sixth element. We have covenant.



I am going to refer regularly in this series to both covenant and to suzerain-vassal treaty. When I do, I am talking about the treaty form used regularly in the 2nd Millennium in the Ancient Near East during the time of Abraham and Moses, used by the Egyptian, Hittite, and Old Babylonian empires. Great kings, or suzerains, made treaties with lesser kings, or vassals. We are going to get into some of the details of these later on in our series. Let me just introduce you to the basic form. Suzerain-vassal treaties of the 2nd Millennium contained these seven elements.

- 1 Title – the name or names of the great king and any titles he liked to go by.
 - 2 Historical Prologue – a statement about the king's historic relationship with this particular vassal people.
 - 3 Stipulations – these are the commandments, the dos and don'ts of the agreement.
 - a. basic (ie. assistance in war – both ways, taxes, etc...)
 - b. detailed
 - 4 Deposition and regular reading – where the treaty should be kept and how often read.
 - 5 Witnesses – this was usually a long list of gods.
 - 6 Blessings – what the king will do if covenant is kept.
 - 7 Curses – what the king will do if covenant is broken.
- (Ratified by a cutting of covenant ceremony – an Oath and sacrifice.)

We also have an oath, and this was not part of the written treaty. But it was an oath made by the vassal in conjunction with sacrifice. And so, covenants were not made. Covenants were cut. Because the sacrifice was a ratification. It is what made the covenant legal.)

We have most of the elements of covenant present in Genesis 1 and 2. The title Lord, God (which in Hebrew is Yahweh, Elohim) appears in 2:4. Chapter 1 and the summary statement of 2:4 about the creation of heaven and earth give us the historical prologue. That defines our relationship to this

point between the great King, God and his vassal person, Adam. Concerning stipulations, Adam is given several dos and only one do not. He is told positively in chapter 1 to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the animal kingdom. God is the great king over all. He has given this land to his vassal Adam, and he expects Adam to rule as his steward. The one “do not” is in 2:17, “from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.”

This is not a written covenant, so we do not have directions about a deposition or a regular reading. The element often left out of biblical covenant is the call of witnesses. Moses might figuratively call heaven and earth as witnesses. He does that in Deuteronomy. But he would certainly not follow the standard practice of calling gods and goddesses as witnesses. He had a statement of blessing in 2:3 when God blessed all that he has made. And we see him blessing Adam with the garden and later with Eve. There is also the assumed blessing of life through the tree of life. The curse for breaking covenant, on the other hand, is stated explicitly, “in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.” And then finally, we do not have the cutting of covenant that involves a sacrifice and an oath. That will come later.

So, though Genesis 1 and 2 do not use directly use covenant language to describe relationship between God and Adam, we do see all these elements of a treaty form in Genesis. And then we are going to later get covenant language with Noah. This is significant for Adam, because God re-establishes covenant with Noah using language from Genesis 1. God says to Noah in 9:9, “I myself do establish my covenant with you, and with your descendants after you.” This followed right after God told Noah in 9:7, “And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.” So, the covenant with Noah appears to be a covenant renewal, which re-establishes a previous covenant made with Adam. It presumes the previous covenant.

Much, much later, Hosea uses covenant language in regard to Adam directly. Rebuking the northern kingdom of Israel, Hosea writes in 6:7, “But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant. They have dealt treacherously against me.” So, Hosea sees the fall in Genesis 3 as a transgression of covenant.

So, this is what we have seen so far. We as people have been created to work, and we have been created to be in covenant relationship with God. A third thing we can see is that we are also created for intimacy.

We are created for Intimacy.

God observes that something is missing. Let’s read 2:18-20.

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” ¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” ¹⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

This part of the story affirms Adams authority over the animals, but more importantly affirms his uniqueness apart from the animals and his need for human companionship. And of course, God was not surprised when none of the animals fit the bill. God knew that was going to happen. It was more for Adam to realize what was going on and for us to see that we truly are unique and different from animals. Moses tells us how God met the need in 2:21-25.

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his

wife; and they shall become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

In our last lesson, I mentioned that to fully reflect the image of God, there must be more than one human. God is love. God is in perfect fellowship as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God created man to reflect him, and to do this fully, man needs someone to love, so that we can reflect the love of God. We also get the sense that Adam himself was not complete. He was in need. God makes us different from one another, but he also makes us complementary that we meet the needs one of another.

God has created mankind for relationship, and he provided marriage between man and woman as a foundational way for human beings to experience an intimate love that reflects godly love. The emphasis that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed suggests more than just physical, it suggests an emotional nakedness or openness that was unique to their original state. It must have been wonderful. They were not emotionally flawed or wounded. They did not have low self-esteem or seek their value in each other. They did not fear judgment. They did not fear rejection. They were naked and unashamed. Their oneness was to be expressed physically through sex, but also more deeply in a oneness of emotional and spiritual connectedness.

That statement of verse 24 that a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife highlights the need for a man and woman to separate from the relationship of their childhood, of their upbringing so they might develop fully as an adult in relationship with their spouse. This is looking ahead after Adam and Eve to their children. They are the mother and father that the first children are going to need to separate from. We also get the introduction of the most basic of social units. A society is as strong as the family. The family provides a healthy context where children can learn to worship God and to love people. The family is the basic context in society for the protection, nourishment, love, care, security, and growth of children. And so, the Bible is going to consistently teach that sex is for marriage. Because when you have children, you want them to be born into a family. And marriage is between a man and a woman because the purpose of the family is to raise up children. Children are supposed to come from this loving union and are supposed to be born into a family environment. That is the vision.

Included in that vision is the leadership role of the man. Marriages and families work best when the husband steps up as a leader, emotionally, spiritually and physically. God gives Adam a special leadership role in his relationship with Eve. We will see that leadership role held up as the expected model through the Bible.

I assume that an ancient person would notice immediately Adam's role as the firstborn. Paul later makes mention of this in 1 Timothy 2:13. The first born has a special authority in the family. Adam had that role. Adam also names Eve, and again suggesting to the ancient reader that he has special role. He does this both before the fall in 2:23 and then again after the fall in 3:20.

I have read one argument rejecting the idea that a husband has a role of leader on the grounds that this creates a power imbalance in relationship, and true love cannot exist where one person has authority. I think there is a point here. This has certainly been a problem, and it continues to be a problem in relationship between man and woman. However, as Christians, we must reject the basic assumption that if a person submits to another person there cannot be love. Our view of the trinity requires us to believe that it is possible for love to exist in a relationship between equals where one willingly submits to the authority of another. Jesus Christ, the Son, willingly submits to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28). They are equals. And they share perfect love one to the other even while the Son submits to the leadership of the Father.

Man and woman were created to reflect the trinitarian love of God. We are created to be a partnership of equals. Genesis 1:27 says that both are in the image of God. We share equal value. Genesis 2:21 says that Eve was made out of a rib from Adam's side. She was not taken out of his head to rule over him, nor from his foot to be under him. Surely, we are to recognize that she is taken from his side to be his life partner. A wife is not a secretary. A wife is not a maid. A wife is a

partner. She is to complement the husband. And he is to complement her. And in that partnership, God has required the man to step up into a special role of leadership.

One final thing we learn about ourselves from Genesis 2. We learn that we are either created male or female.

We are male or female.

I don't think this needed to be a point 10 years ago. But it is increasingly becoming important in the modern world. Again, Genesis 1:27-28, "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.'"

God has created human beings as male and female. Modern western society continues to oppose the idea of masculinity and femininity to the point of creating utter confusion. Adults, who want to break free from God and claim some sense of self-determination as the captain of their own soul, have not only claimed the right to reject biological fact, so that they might have this right of self-definition, but they are not content for that to just be true of them, but they want to hoist that awful burden of self-determination onto teenagers and even on children that we allow little children to tell us what they are. To define themselves. We are supposed to say, "We do not know what you are. You have to tell us what you are."

And that is just simply wrong. It is a huge burden to place on a child. We do not define ourselves. We can't define ourselves. God defines us. God has created us with purpose. He has created us in covenant with him. He has created us to have intimacy with other people. Male and female he has created us. Each one of us he has stamped with value and with dignity of being created in his image. We do not define our value. God defines our value. But that is not the end of the story. For us to be sober and honest about who we really are, there is wonderful, precious things about us, but we also have to acknowledge that we are deeply broken. And we can't know ourselves. We need someone to help us know who we are. And we are going to need someone to make us whole again. But we are not broken yet, that comes in the next chapter of our story. That is for our next lesson in Genesis 3.

Reflection Questions

1. What stands out to you as you read Genesis 2:4-25? What do you notice as interesting or important or strange or confusing? What questions come to mind?
2. How does recognizing God's intention for people to work affect how you see yourself? Can you relate to the idea that you are made for work or do you feel more like you are made for the weekend? If Adam is made for work in chapter 2, then what is the nature of the curse that comes in 3:17-19?
3. What stands out to you in regard to Adam's covenant relationship with God?
4. What stands out to you in regard to the intimacy to be shared between Adam and Eve and the instruction for future children to eventually separate from their parents? What does this say about husband and wife relationships? What does it say about the family?
5. How would you describe the tension between being made for work and being made for intimacy?
6. God has created humankind as male and female. How would you describe maleness or masculinity? How would you describe femaleness or femininity?