

Background

Be sure to read the Foreword to the last lesson for some introductory information on Genesis and this study. Just like chapter 1, there's a lot of major content in here, so prepare to dig in.

Read Genesis 2:1-7

Q (v1-3): Did the omnipotent God really need a rest?

cf. Is 40:28

No. He can do anything. He doesn't get tired.

Q: Then what was the purpose of the Sabbath ("rest")?

cf. Ex 31:13, Mk 2:27

As far as God goes, He "rested" on the seventh day to reflect upon His accomplishment - much as humans like to take a step back and appreciate their work when done. Where do you think we got that trait from? Oh right, we were created in God's image!

But Jesus said in *Mark 2:27* that, contrary to popular belief, the Sabbath was created for us. Specifically, we are to use it as an opportunity to rest from our work. God knows that we'll burn ourselves out laboring non-stop (especially in this country and culture) and wants us to take the opportunity to relax and spend some time interacting with or considering all the blessings that He's surrounded us with. The natural response in that situation should be appreciation and seeking a closer relationship with Him. *That's why we get together on Sundays to worship.*

***Exodus 31:13* adds that we use this opportunity of being different than the rest of the world to teach others (including our children) about God. Just as Christ in the NT asked His followers to stand out in a crowd, God in the OT wanted His children to be different than the nations around them. In both cases, being an oddball attracts attention, leading to witnessing opportunities, leading to reconciliation to God, leading to His glory.**

Now, I said we worship on Sunday because that's when we typically observe the Sabbath in Christianity. However, it appears that the Sabbath was actually a Saturday, which is when the Jews observe it. The day isn't that important, though. The idea is that you set regular time to clear your schedule and mind and seek after and rest in God. Maybe you have to work Sundays. Maybe you work second shift. God's ok with that (*Hos 6:6, Mt 12:1-7*). Just get a time of rest into your routine as He told you to and be sure to share some of it with other believers.

v4 While chapter 1 was an overview of the six days of creation, chapter 2:4+ takes a step back to start a more detailed retelling of the creation of man and his relationship with God.

This is a good time to bring up the fact that the books of the Bible aren't always laid out in strict chronological order. There may be gaps of years or decades between chapters. Some chapters or books may go *back* in time to cover a related item that happened previously or concurrently with another event. Think of these as flashbacks, or "Meanwhile in..." interludes on your favorite TV show serial. Some books even re-tell another one's content from a new viewpoint (such as Kings/Chronicles or the gospels of Matthew/Mark/Luke/John).

v6 The original word for "mist" is hard to translate. In short, it doesn't appear that rain was a thing yet. God was irrigating the planet through dew or small springs...i.e., water from below, not above.

Q (v7): What differences do you see in how man was created vs everything else?

The root word for “formed” is the same used of a potter working on a clay pot. There is design and intent and care and a steady hand implied. We are God’s masterpiece and He gave the appropriate amount of attention to detail.

Further, we are the only creation that He breathed into. Just like the animals before us, we are living beings, yes. But we also have an infusion of God’s spirit...His character...His image. This separates us from the rest of creation.

Read Genesis 2:8-17

Q (v8 & 10-14): Where was Eden located?

No one knows. The rivers mentioned would have been obliterated/rerouted in the flood.

This is a good time to bring up another major point of the Bible:

What God put in the Bible, He put in there for a reason. What God left out of the Bible, He left out there for a reason. Knowing where Eden was isn’t important to our faith, so He left it out. We tend to get focused on insignificant (but mysterious) details and then miss the big point. We’ll cover this more in chapter 6.

v9a God’s creation wasn’t purely practical...He made some things just to be pleasing to our senses.

Q (v9b): What’s the deal with the trees? Did they have magic powers? Why leave them there?

The trees likely didn’t have any special power in themselves (*). They were signs of obedience and disobedience to God. Obedience leads to eternal life, while disobedience leads to separation from Him, loss of innocence (knowledge of sin and thus contrasting good) and eventual death. There is a lot of high-level metaphysical and philosophical discussion on the point of the trees that will give you a headache...and none of it is anything we can confirm until we see God in heaven. Despite our free will, He had already planned for the occasion of our disobedience through Christ, literally ahead of time.

(*). On that note, *Revelation 2:7* and *22:2* indicate that trees of life will exist in heaven, so we’ll get to find out for sure later.

Q (v15): How did God plan for Adam to spend his free time?

Well, enjoying the splendors of the garden and spending time with God, sure. But here we see that God made Adam to...yes, work. However, this would be an enjoyable sort of work before the curse to come in the upcoming verses. Hobbyist gardeners can relate to the fun of tending a garden...when they don’t have to deal with weeds or pests. Construction workers may enjoy the outdoors and seeing the results of their labor, floor by floor...without the sunburn, slipped discs and wage disputes.

So don’t expect to sit on a cloud and play a harp for eternity in heaven...God’s going to put you to work...but in a job that makes use of your talents and that provides you with happiness and accomplishment. The cliché of “Find a job you like; then you’ll never work a day in your life” applies here.

Q (v16-17): Was God lying when He said that Adam would die if He ate of the forbidden fruit?

God cannot lie (*Titus 1:1-2*), so that’s out. The literal translation of this phrase is “dying, you will die.” That is, it would be a gradual process with a guaranteed ending...death.

Read Genesis 2:18-25

v18-20 is the first time God says that something isn't right with creation. In dramatic Father-and-son fashion, God then brings the already created, but unnamed animals to Adam. As they pass by, Adam names them, using the authority given to him by God. However, we can easily picture Adam coming to the realization of v20b: "Two of them, two of them, two of them...one of me...two of them...one of me..." God was setting His son up for one of the best gifts ever (see Mt 6:8b).

Q (v18): Does this verse indicate that woman is inferior to man?

No, God simply described woman as a helper...literally "one who helps" ...and it's the same word used of God when He assists us.

"But wait", you may say, "1 Peter 3:7 says that women are the weaker vessel!" Yes, this is true and is an elementary observation of sexual dimorphism. Human males were built (by God) to be comparatively larger, more muscular, more aggressive and defensive. Men were created (in part) to be the physical protectors of women. That's it. There's nothing said about man being a superior gender. This could turn into a massive study in itself, so I'll leave it at that for now.

Again, we'll discuss this more later, but there are things God made men better at. And there are things that God made women better at. Only when they work together do you have a whole, functioning unit. They help one another. As soon as one feels that it's superior, things go south.

v21 In Gen 15:12, Abraham also enters a "deep sleep" by the hand of God but appears to have remained semi-aware of what God was doing during that time. It may be possible that Adam also observed, in some form, as God fashioned his perfect bride.

Q (v21): Why would God create the woman from the man's rib? Why not from dirt, like Adam was?

The point was that Adam would 100% identify with this partner. She was, as he said in v23, part of his core.

Biblical commentator, Matthew Henry, said this:

**"..the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam;
not made out of his head to rule over him,
nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him,
but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."**

Q (v22-23): Who selected the woman? Who brought the two together?

What was man doing (before the divinely-administered sedation, anyway)?

God selected the man's perfect match and God brought the two of them together.

Adam was keeping himself occupied with what God had given him to do.

Why am I asking you these questions? Because modern dating often emphasizes barhopping, dating websites, or exposing yourself (physically or otherwise) on social media. In short, we are doing most of the work. We have a picture in our heads of what we want and we either scramble about desperately grasping at straws, or we isolate ourselves hoping that our prince or princess will suddenly show up on the doorstep.

We already discussed that God knows our needs ahead of time. We already discussed that as our Creator, God knows us and what we need (need ≠ want) better than we do. I propose, based upon this passage, that we prioritize serving God in whatever capacity He's already given us: volunteer work, church service, family care etc and let Him bring what we need to us.

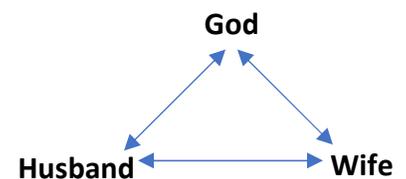
That's not to say you can't go out on dates etc. But you should prioritize God's place in your life first (which is necessary for a successful marriage anyway), and be willing to see what He's offering (as it's often not what you were looking for...in fact, it may have been sitting next to you all along). God is the best matchmaker, not the Tinder app on your phone. If you rush a mate or force God's hand, you'll both pay for it later.

v23 "This is now" can be translated "At last!" Adam now saw someone similar to himself, and yet different. Enchanting, enthralling, beautiful. This is what would make him complete. This is what he didn't know he needed until God figuratively dropped her in his lap.

v23 Adam continues in His right to name God's creations. However, he gave her a name matching his own, indicating parity.

v23-24 You're seeing here the institution of marriage (*Mt 19:3-6*). God brought one man and one woman together to be joined for their lifetimes. This joining wasn't just hugging or having sex. Marriage is becoming one in all areas of life: spiritual, mental, emotional, financial and only last: physical. Sex is not a purely physical event, despite what cultural revolutions or hedonists may say – it is a joining of souls, for lack of a better term. Doing things out of order or in an incomplete manner results in relational problems (some secular science is even acknowledging neural changes brought about by premarital or extramarital relations, causing future relationships to be less rewarding/harder to maintain).

Further, this joining includes a separation from previous attachments. Parents become occasional advisors and not rulers. Best friends become normal friends. The bride and the groom seek God first, spouse second, and themselves last, often portrayed in the triangle shown to the right.



Finally, God's desired result of healthy marriage is godly children and thus, a godly society (*Deut 6:1-9*).

Do you see why Christians are so protective of God's plan for marriage and sexuality?

Do you see what happens to the world when we abandon God's plan as being inconvenient or archaic?

Read *Eph 5:22-32* to see that the picture of marriage is also a picture of Christ's relationship to the church.

Q (v18-24): But why wasn't God good enough for Adam?

I.e., if God's so great and awesome, why did Adam need anyone else?

Can we get by with only God? Yes. Everything we have comes from Him anyway (*1 Cor 4:7b*) and He's the only One that saves us, never lies to us and will never ultimately disappoint us.

Except God created us as social creatures. We were made to spend time and interact with other humans, as well. Most of us will suffer if alone (physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually) for any length of time. While I adore God, it's often hard for me to relate to Him...I can't interact with him using the five senses that He gave me and I can't begin to understand what's going through His head (...which isn't entirely different than dealing with the opposite sex, I admit!). It's also hard to fulfill that command to be fruitful and multiply by myself.

Let me give you an example. I don't have children, so a lot of my learning and eureka moments about God's parenting skills comes from pets. As of writing this, it was about 18 months ago that my wife and I purchased a puppy, which we named "Jude". As dogs are wont to do, he follows us everywhere and worships the ground we walk on. We love him and accordingly provide him with varied (healthy) food, treats, training, exercise, grooming, attention and plenty of new toys. We've also encouraged him to work (there's that awful word again) in the manner to which his breed was created for (guardianship) which keeps his mind sharp and makes him feel as accomplished as a dog can be.

However, despite our being "perfect" providers for him and having a mutual adoration...Jude still longed for other playmates – similar to himself...you know, quadrupeds. He'd whine and struggle to be near passing dogs. He'd cry when our two cats refused to play with him...even after he ran to bring his favorite toy to them as an offering. I don't know if he understood what he was missing, but we did.

It was not good that our "son" was alone. He needed a companion similar to himself. His human parents couldn't be expected to share his love of sniffing butts or chasing squirrels. His naturally-independent feline siblings couldn't be expected to adopt pack mentality. Nor were they eager to play with a miniature polar bear that weighed 102lbs more than their combined weight and was charging in their direction like a runaway freight train...toy in his smiling mouth or not. He needed another dog (and one big enough to handle him). Enter the new puppy, Eve (not a coincidental name), of the same breed and from durable stock.

Now, rather than feeling jealous of his new companion, we are overjoyed to watch the two of them enjoy what we carefully planned and prepared for them, knowing that we will remain their alpha pack leader.

I hope that through your children or pets or someone you've taken under your wing, you've experienced just a fraction of how God feels about us. This is not happenstance. God gave us these relationships so that with our comparatively feeble minds, we can experience firsthand how He feels about us (and give Him glory in return – *Ro 1:20*).

v25 In their innocence, the couple was comfortable with their nakedness, physically and otherwise. There was no keeping of secrets or shame in talking about feelings, etc. Thanks to sin (coming in the next chapter), this is very difficult for us to accomplish now, even in a faithful Christian marriage.

There's an implication that sexual relations may have been part of this. It's unlikely that the conception of their first child in chapter 4 was their first sexual experience together.