

Storyteller
GENESIS
THE BEGINNING

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THE STORYTELLER SERIES

God could've chosen to reveal Himself in any way He desired, yet in His wisdom, He chose to reveal Himself in the context of a story. We come to know and understand this reality as we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures and begin to see the entirety of Scripture as one interconnected story. By becoming familiar with the individual stories of Scripture, we train ourselves to see each as one part of God's big story.

Storyteller is a series of devotional and group Bible study experiences designed to take people through Scripture in a way that is beautiful, intuitive, and interactive. Each volume uses a book of the Bible or a portion of Scripture from within a book to examine a key theme. This theme guides the Bible study experience and gives readers handles to help understand and digest what they're reading.

At the end of each study, you should have a deeper understanding of God, His Word, the big themes of Scripture, the connectedness of God's story, and His work in your life.

Let's enter the story together.

ABOUT GENESIS

The book of Genesis takes its name from the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), which called it Genesis (Greek Gk *Geneseos*), meaning “of birth”—a reference to Genesis 2:4.

AUTHOR

Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the five books that include the book of Genesis, has been attributed to Moses. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah’s author.

BACKGROUND

The first five books of the Bible are known as the Torah (a Hebrew term for “law” or “instruction”) or the Pentateuch (literally, five vessels). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the “primeval history,” showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the “patriarchal history,” focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons. Genesis unfolds God’s plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham’s descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

DATE

Moses is the central figure of the next four books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). He is not featured in Genesis and lived many years after the events described. Moses likely wrote these down sometime between 1500 BC and 1300 BC. Prior to Moses writing it down, the history and story.

KEY THEMES

Genesis has several key themes that are important throughout the rest of the Bible.

CREATION: Genesis introduces God as the sovereign Lord and Creator of all things. God created everything out of nothing. He is separate from the created order, and no part of creation is to be considered an extension of God.

HUMAN LIFE: Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, unique from the rest of creation, to have fellowship with God. All human beings at every age and every state bear the image of God and are also born with a sinful nature inherited from Adam and Eve.

SIN: Adam and Eve chose freely to disobey God, fell from innocence, and lost their freedom. Their sinful nature has passed to every other human being. Sin resulted in death, both physical and spiritual. Sin has led to a world of pain and struggle.

COVENANT: Genesis first introduces the idea of covenants. Genesis is a narrative of relationships, and certainly relationships grounded in covenants with God. These covenants provide a unifying principle for understanding the whole of Scripture and define the relationship between God and man.¹ For more see page 148.

WHY STUDY GENESIS?

The book of Genesis is the great book of beginnings. Genesis permits us to view the beginning of a multitude of realities that shape our daily existence: the creation of the universe and the planet earth; the origins of plant and animal life; and the origins of human beings, marriage, families, nations, industry, artistic expression, religious ritual, prophecy, sin, law, crime, conflict, punishment, and death.

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God's original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God's covenant with Israel that was established with the giving of the law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the law.

It helps us understand where we came from, what went wrong, and how God has a plan to redeem the world through Jesus Christ, who is the Son of Abraham.



OUTLINE OF GENESIS 1–11

I. Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1–2:3)

A. Creator and creation (1:1–2)

B. Six days of creation (1:3–31)

C. Seventh day—day of consecration (2:1–3)

II. The Human Family in and outside the Garden (2:4–4:26)

A. The man and woman in the garden (2:4–25)

B. The man and woman expelled from the garden (3:1–24)

C. Adam and Eve’s family outside the garden (4:1–26)

III. Adam’s Family Line (5:1–6:8)

A. Introduction: Creation and blessing (5:1–2)

B. “Image of God” from Adam to Noah (5:3–32)

C. Conclusion: Procreation and perversion (6:1–8)

IV. Noah and His Family (6:9–9:29)

- A. Righteous Noah and the corrupt world (6:9–12)
- B. Coming judgment but the ark of promise (6:13–7:10)
- C. Worldwide flood of judgment (7:11–24)
- D. God’s remembrance and rescue of Noah (8:1–14)
- E. Exiting the ark (8:15–19)
- F. Worship and the word of promise (8:20–22)
- G. God’s covenant with the new world (9:1–17)
- H. Noah’s sons and future blessing (9:18–29)

V. The Nations and the Tower of Babylon (10:1–11:26)

- A. Table of Nations (10:1–32)
- B. Tower of Babylon (11:1–9)
- C. Family line of Abram (11:10–26)²

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each week follows a repeated rhythm to guide you in your study of Genesis and was crafted with lots of white space and photographic imagery to facilitate a time of reflection on Scripture.

The week begins with an introduction to the themes of the week. Throughout each week you'll find Scripture readings, devotions, and beautiful imagery to guide your time.



WEEK 1 CREATION

GENESIS 1:1-5

THE CREATION

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 When the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning—the first day.

20 GENESIS

DAY 1

THE FIRST DAY

While the creation account of Genesis 1 may not be scientific, it is direct and clear. Straight away, we are faced to reckon with divine truths that shape our view of the world. Namely, the whole world was created by the will and word of the God of the Bible. To do this, He purposefully named those into order.

He alone is the Creator who has great freedom and power to speak matter into existence out of nothing. There is, thus, no other creator. He creates with His word only because He chose to create it. This is not a deity who gets to handle with other so-called gods or with any powers of the creation. He is the only God in other ancient origin stories. As the apostle Paul told those gathered in Antiochia centuries later, "The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in temples made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:24-25).

This God made the heavens and the earth. To believe the earth exists due to God's speech is one thing, but to believe that the heavens are His creative handiwork as well is quite another. This is not merely a reference to what we might call our atmosphere and the universe's many wonders—it also includes the unseen spiritual realm where God and the angels dwell. God speaks His word into reality.

God created time itself. This alone should lead us to wonder. Though God has no beginning, His creation does. Time is the first of God's chosen tools for bringing order out of chaos. With the creation of periods of light and darkness, chaos is given a firm foundation, and we are given yet another reason to marvel.

Creation 21

Each week includes five days of Scripture reading along with a short devotional thought and three questions to process what you've read.

The Scripture reading is printed out for you with plenty of space for you to take notes, circle, underline, and interact with the passage.



DAY 34 PAUSE & LISTEN

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations: I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

GENESIS 9:12-13

40 GENESIS

Creation 41

The sixth day contains no reading beyond a couple of verses to give you time to pause and listen to what God has said through the Scriptures this week. You may be tempted to skip this day all together, but resist this temptation. Sit and be quiet with God—even if it's only for a few minutes.

The seventh day each week offers a list of open-ended questions that apply to any passage of Scripture. Use this day to reflect on your own or meet with a group to discuss what you've learned. Take intentional time to remember and reflect on what the story of Genesis is teaching you.

DAY 7

REFLECTION

Use these questions for personal reflection or group discussion on Genesis 1.

What stuck out to you most in this week's reading? What surprised you? Confused you?

What does this week's Scripture teach you about God and His character?

What does this week's Scripture teach you about humanity and our need for grace?

What do the origins of life, as described by the Bible, teach us about the meaning of life?

What steps of faith and endurance in God asking you to take through these Scriptures?

PRAY
God thank You for being the Creator of all that exists. We praise You for filling and sustaining us, every one.

44 GENESIS

Creation 45

CREATOR

The Apostles' Creed, an early statement of faith, begins in this way:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Among the attributes of God the authors felt most important to state about God in this short statement they chose "creator of heaven and earth." Being creative is essential to God's identity. This is not an idea found only in Genesis but one supported by the authors' reason of Scripture. The attribute of God's character helps us understand who He is and what He is like.²

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.

PSALM 19

You, Lord, are the only God. You created the heavens, the highest heavens with all their stars, the earth and all that is on it, the sea and all that is in them. You give life to all of them, and all the stars bow down worship you.

PSALM 19

Look up and see! Who created these? He brings out the stars by number; he calls all of them by name. Because of his great power and strength, not one of them is missing.

PSALM 19

None this is what the LORD sees—the one who created you, Jacob, and the one who formed you, Israel— "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine."

PSALM 19

The Gospel of John teaches that Jesus is the Creator God of Genesis:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through him, and apart from him no one thing was created that has been created.

JOHN 1:1-3

28 GENESIS

Creation 29

Throughout each week of study, you will notice callout boxes or supplemental pages provided to give greater context and clarity to the Scripture you're reading. These features will help you connect the story of Genesis to the bigger story of Scripture.

LEADING A GROUP

Each week of study contains a set of questions that can be used for small group meetings. These open-ended questions are meant to guide discussion of the week's Scripture passage. No matter the size of your group, here are some helpful tips for guiding discussion.

PREPARE

REVIEW the Scripture and your answers to the week's questions ahead of time.

PRAY over your group as well as the Scriptures you've been studying. Ask God's Spirit for help to lead the group deeper into God's truth and deeper in relationship with one another.

MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS

We live in a time when our attention is increasingly divided. Try to see your group time as a space and respite from the digital clutter—from scrolling, notifications, likes, and newsfeeds. Commit to one another to give focused time and attention to the discussion at hand and minimize outside distractions. Help people focus on what's most important: connecting with God, with the Bible, and with one another.

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION

A good small group experience has the following characteristics.

EVERYONE IS INCLUDED. Your goal is to foster a community where people are welcome just as they are but encouraged to grow spiritually.

EVERYONE PARTICIPATES. Encourage everyone to ask questions, share, or read aloud.

NO ONE DOMINATES. Even though you may be "leading" the group, try to see yourself as a participant steering the conversation rather than a teacher imparting information.

DON'T RUSH. Don't feel that a moment of silence is a bad thing. People may need time, and we should be glad to give it to them. Don't feel like you have to ask all the questions or stay away from questions that aren't included. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to one another. Take your time.

INPUT IS AFFIRMED AND FOLLOWED UP. Make sure you point out something true or helpful in a response. Don't just move on. Build community with follow-up questions, asking other people to share when they have experienced similar things or how a truth has shaped their understanding of God and the Scripture you're studying. Conversation stalls when people feel that you don't want to hear their answers or that you're looking for only a certain answer. Engagement and affirmation keeps the conversation going.

GOD AND HIS WORD ARE CENTRAL. The questions in this study are meant to steer the conversation back to God, His Word, and the work of the gospel in our lives. Opinions and experiences are valuable and can be helpful, but God is the center of the Bible, the center of our story, and should be the center of our discussion. Trust Him to lead the discussion. Continually point people to the Word and to active steps of faith.

KEEP CONNECTING

Spiritual growth occurs in the context of community. Think of ways to connect with group members during the week. Your group will be more enjoyable the more you get to know one another through time spent outside of an official group meeting. The more people are comfortable with and involved in one another's lives, the more they'll look forward to being together. When people move beyond being friendly to truly being friends who form a community, they come to each session eager to engage instead of merely attending. Reserve time each week to touch base with individual group members.



WEEK 1

CREATION

Every story has a beginning.

Human beings have long sought to understand how the universe came to be. Many people groups from ancient times recorded their ideas and stories about the origins of the world. These varied accounts share many similarities, yet none truly compare to the creation account of Genesis.

Only Genesis claims that all the world exists due to the work of a single God and that God continues to maintain its existence. Only Genesis instructs readers to glory in the God who made the marvelous things we see, not deify and worship those things. Only Genesis puts an enormously high value on human beings, stating that men and women are made in God's very image.

What separated Genesis from other creation accounts millennia ago separates it from atheistic and scientific theories in our day. These hypotheses presume that all life and matter originated from the primordial conditions of the early universe and the processes that unfolded over time. In contrast, Genesis gives credit to the will and word of God for the world's existence and shows that God created the world with purpose and intent.

We should not expect the opening verses of Genesis to answer specific scientific questions we might have about the earth's origins. The book of Genesis is more like a hymn, poem, or song—it is not at all like a scientific textbook or philosophical muse. Instead, we should read it and marvel at the transcendent mystery of God as Creator and consider the worldview implications as we do. We will learn something about how creation came to be, but more importantly, why it came to be.

Let's begin at the beginning.

GENESIS 1:1-5

THE CREATION

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.
³ Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

DAY
1

THE FIRST DAY

While the creation account of Genesis 1 may not be scientific, it is direct and clear. Straight away, we are forced to reckon with divine truths that shape our view of the world. Namely, the whole world was created by the will and word of the God of the Bible. To do this, He purposefully turned chaos into order.

He alone is the Creator who has great freedom and power to speak matter into existence out of nothing. Prior to this, He alone existed. He co-exists with this world only because He chose to create it. This is not a deity who goes to battle with other so-called gods or with any aspects of His creation like we might find in other ancient origin stories. As the apostle Paul told those gathered in Areopagus centuries later, “The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things” (Acts 17:24-25).

This God made the heavens and the earth. To believe the earth exists due to God’s speech is one thing, but to believe that the heavens are His creative handiwork as well is quite another. This is not merely a reference to what we might call our atmosphere and the universe’s many wonders—this also includes the unseen spiritual realm where God and the angels dwell. God spoke His own realm into reality.

God created time itself. This alone should lead us to wonder. Though God has no beginning, His creation does. Time is the first of God’s chosen tools for bringing order out of chaos. With the creation of periods of light and darkness, chaos is given its first boundaries, and we are given yet another reason to marvel.

A low-angle photograph of a dense forest. The sun is shining brightly from the upper right, creating a prominent starburst effect with rays of light radiating across the scene. The trees are tall and slender, with thick trunks. The foliage is lush and green, with some leaves showing signs of autumn. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

The world only exists because
God chose to create it.

REFLECTIONS

God is eternal and stands outside of time and creation. How does reflecting on God's "otherness" affect your view of Him?

Why would God, who does not need anything, make the world to begin with?

How does what we believe about the way the world came to exist affect the way we view the world?

INSIGHT

God created the world out of nothing. Theologians called this *ex-nihilo*, which comes from the Latin meaning "out of nothing." Prior to creation, God was all that existed. He is eternal and, therefore, timeless. While this might be a lot to wrap our minds around, it's meant to feel that way. Though God is infinite and beyond what we can fully comprehend, God is knowable because He has chosen to make Himself known.

GENESIS 1:6-13

⁶Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.” ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse “sky.” Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. ¹²The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³Evening came and then morning: the third day.

DAY
2

THE SECOND AND THIRD DAY

Whereas Genesis 1:1-5 establishes God as the Creator and His creation of time as the first function of bringing order to chaos, verses 6-13 introduce two other major functions of creation that further His ordering work: weather and agriculture. God intentionally designed the world so that plants bear seeds and seeds grow into new plants, and the waters are the precipitation that plays such a crucial role in sustaining and promoting life. He is not only the Creator of life—He is also the Sustainer of life.

Individuals who have spent a significant amount of time living in more rural environments likely have a better understanding of what it is like to “live with the land.” To wake with the sunrise and rest with the sunset in every season, to plant and harvest crops and eat what is available in those seasons, to pray for rain and against famine—such is life for those who farm and provide food for the world.

God saw what He had made and called it “good.” The shifting of seasons and of time and the rhythms of life inherent to the natural world are irrefutably good. That God saw that all of this was good means it all operates according to the purpose of His design.

Everything God does and everything God makes is good because He good. And we can see that in the very first days of the world. The cycle of life and growth are already identifiable and traceable here at the beginning. These verses compel us to reflect on the pace and rhythms of our life as well as the One who gave us life.



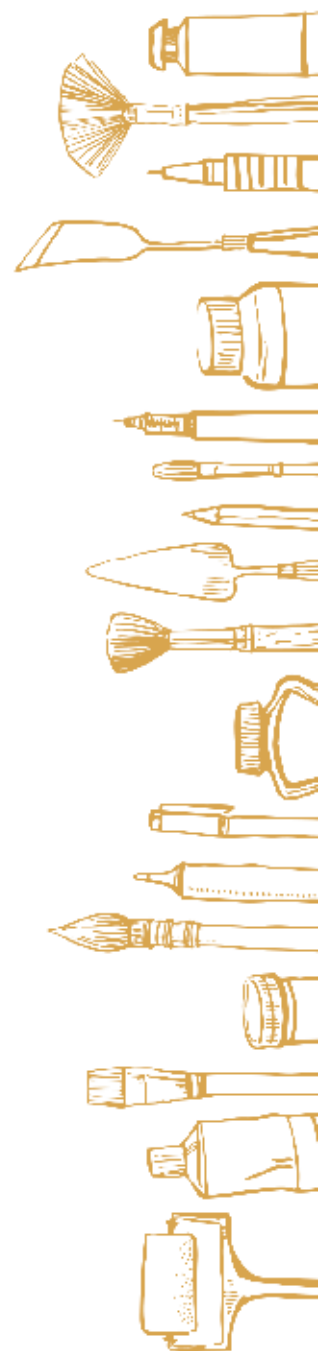
Everything God makes is good
because He is good.

REFLECTIONS

What ways do we see God's order and purpose on display in His world other than nature?

How are you embracing living within the rhythms of God's good creation?

How does trying to live apart from the cycles and functions God gave creation create stress and chaos in our lives?



CREATOR

The Apostles' Creed, an early statement of faith, begins in this way:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

Among the attributes of God the authors felt most important to name about God in this short statement they chose “creator of heaven and earth.” Being a creator is essential to God’s identity. This is not an idea found only in Genesis but one supported by the uniform witness of Scripture. This attribute of God’s character helps us understand who He is and what He is like.³

*The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.*

PSALM 19:1

*You, LORD, are the only God.
You created the heavens,
the highest heavens with all their stars,
the earth and all that is on it,
the seas and all that is in them.
You give life to all of them,
and all the stars of heaven worship you.*

NEHEMIAH 9:6

*Look up and see!
Who created these?
He brings out the stars by number;
he calls all of them by name.
Because of his great power and strength,
not one of them is missing.*

ISAIAH 40:26

*Now this is what the LORD says—
the one who created you, Jacob,
and the one who formed you, Israel—
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name; you are mine.”*

ISAIAH 43:1

The Gospel of John teaches that Jesus is the Creator God of Genesis:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.
All things were created through him, and apart from him
not one thing was created that has been created.*

JOHN 1:1–3

GENESIS 1:14-15

¹⁴Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. ¹⁵They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.” And it was so.

DAY
3

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH DAY

The journey through the story of creation swings wildly from the vastness of space to the depths of the oceans in days four and five.

On day four, we realize God was not necessarily making something every day but was speaking every day. God created by speaking, but in speaking, He was not always creating matter. In verses 14-19, He was creating function. These luminaries (the sun, moon, and stars) already existed with the creation of the heavens and the earth and time in verses 1-3. But in this passage, God gave them the functions of marking time: day, night, seasons, and years.

While the celestial bodies receive special attention in the creation story because they serve the purpose of marking time, the waters of the earth receive special attention because the creatures in them get singled out in this narrative in a way that other forms of animate life do not—except human beings, of course. The oceans remain a marvelous mystery to the most dedicated and well-equipped scientists even to this day. Yet the clear intent of the writer is to communicate that even the mysteries of the deep owe their existence to this sovereign Creator and are not to be worshiped as idols or feared as something beyond His control. Rather God's total governance of the world should lead us into awe and wonder.

Interestingly, the first recorded blessing in the Bible was issued to the first living being created (v. 22). It is their great privilege to fill the waters and the sky. They need God's blessing to make life because only God's word brings life. With a word, God brought these creatures into existence, and with the additional word of a blessing, God gave them assurance of continued existence.



God's total governance of the world should
lead us into awe and wonder.

REFLECTIONS

Which is the more compelling area of interest to you: space or the ocean? Why? How might learning more about these areas lead you to worship God?

What parts of nature do you sometimes fail to appreciate as part of God's good work? Why?

Recognizing that God has blessed the animal kingdom, how should humans relate to these creatures?

INSIGHT

Days one, two, and three of creation involve God forming the earth and causing the unproductive to become productive. Days four, five, and six involve filling the earth He formed. What was uninhabited became inhabited with life.

GENESIS 1:24–31

²⁴ Then God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵ So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.” ²⁹ God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, ³⁰ for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it—I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

DAY
4

THE SIXTH DAY

We can't read Genesis 1:24-31 without wondering at its implications for human beings. This passage is one of the most insightful texts in all of Scripture and serves as a foundational building block for understanding the God who created us and what it means to be a human being.

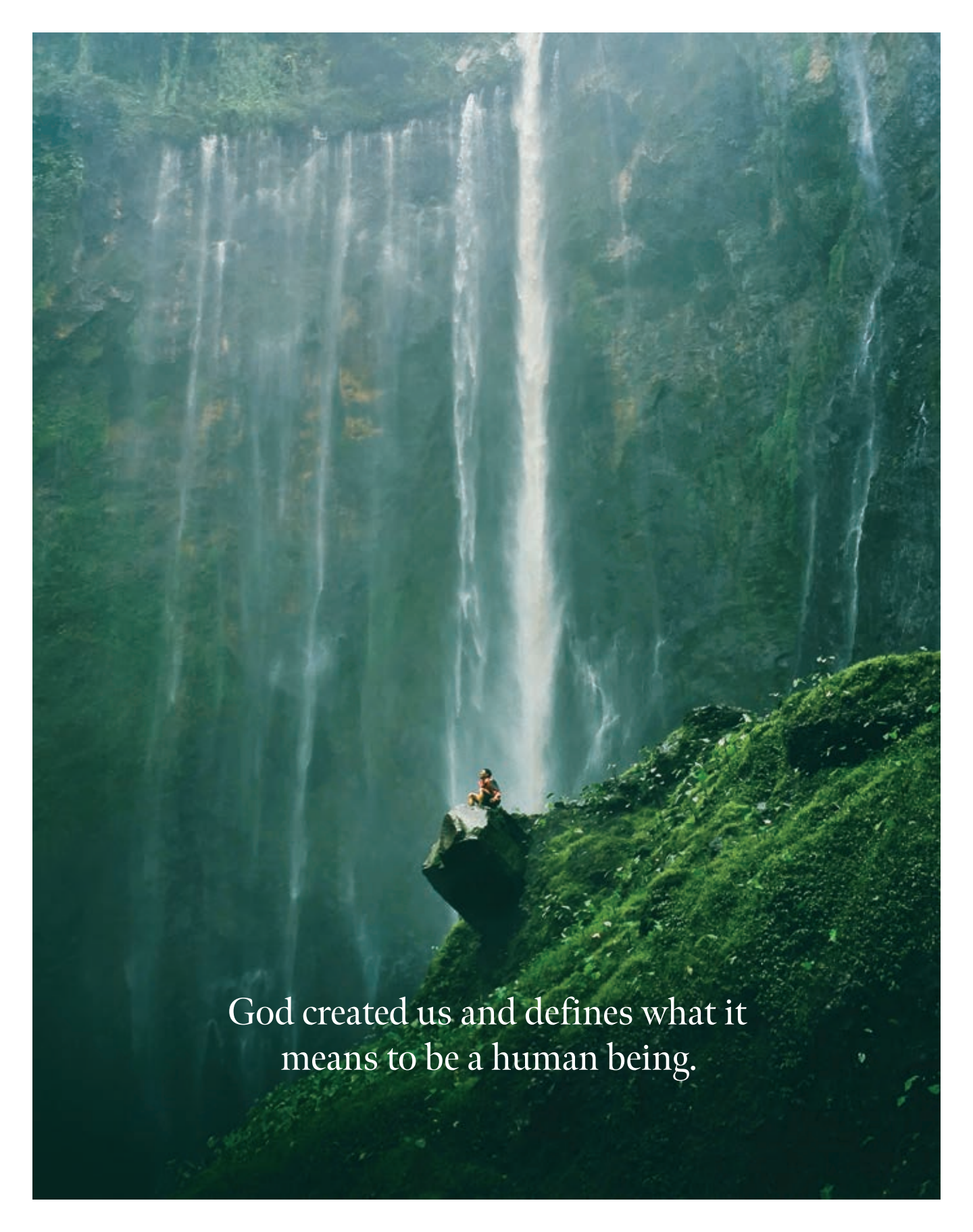
First we learn that human beings are made in the image of God, which tells us something about ourselves and something about God. Notice the use of the plural in verse 26: "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Understanding what it means to be made in God's image in some ways hinges on whether the writer of Genesis and his audience were already aware of some type of plurality in the person of God—what we now know as the Trinity.

A closer reading of verse 27 seems to support the idea that the writer did have such a belief. Twice he tells us that human beings were created in God's image, and at the third mention, he highlighted their being created "male and female." The single human being (for we are all human) is created as a plurality that reflects God's own singularity and plurality. Gender is more than biology; it reflects the very nature of God.

Second, God gave human beings a task. Like the creatures made before us, we are also blessed to reproduce but also to serve as caretakers over the other living creatures blessed to grow in number. Human beings are to possess a love for all forms of life and treasure the whole earth. Through their care, God provides the food needed for human beings to thrive.

Human beings subdue and rule the earth but not in a domineering or flippant way. We are to image God by bringing order and functioning as sub-creators. We are to lovingly tend the world God made as His representatives.

This, God says, is "very good indeed" (v. 31).

A photograph of a person sitting on a large, dark rock in the foreground. The person is wearing a red shirt and dark pants. Behind them is a massive, multi-tiered waterfall cascading down a steep, mossy cliff. The water is white and frothy, creating a misty atmosphere. The surrounding vegetation is lush and green. The overall scene is dramatic and awe-inspiring.

God created us and defines what it
means to be a human being.

REFLECTIONS

What does it teach us about ourselves to know every human being is made in the image of God?

What are some ways the idea of being made in God's image is distorted today?

What are the implications for human identity, particularly as it relates to gender, given this text?

GENESIS 2:1-3

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.² On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

DAY
5

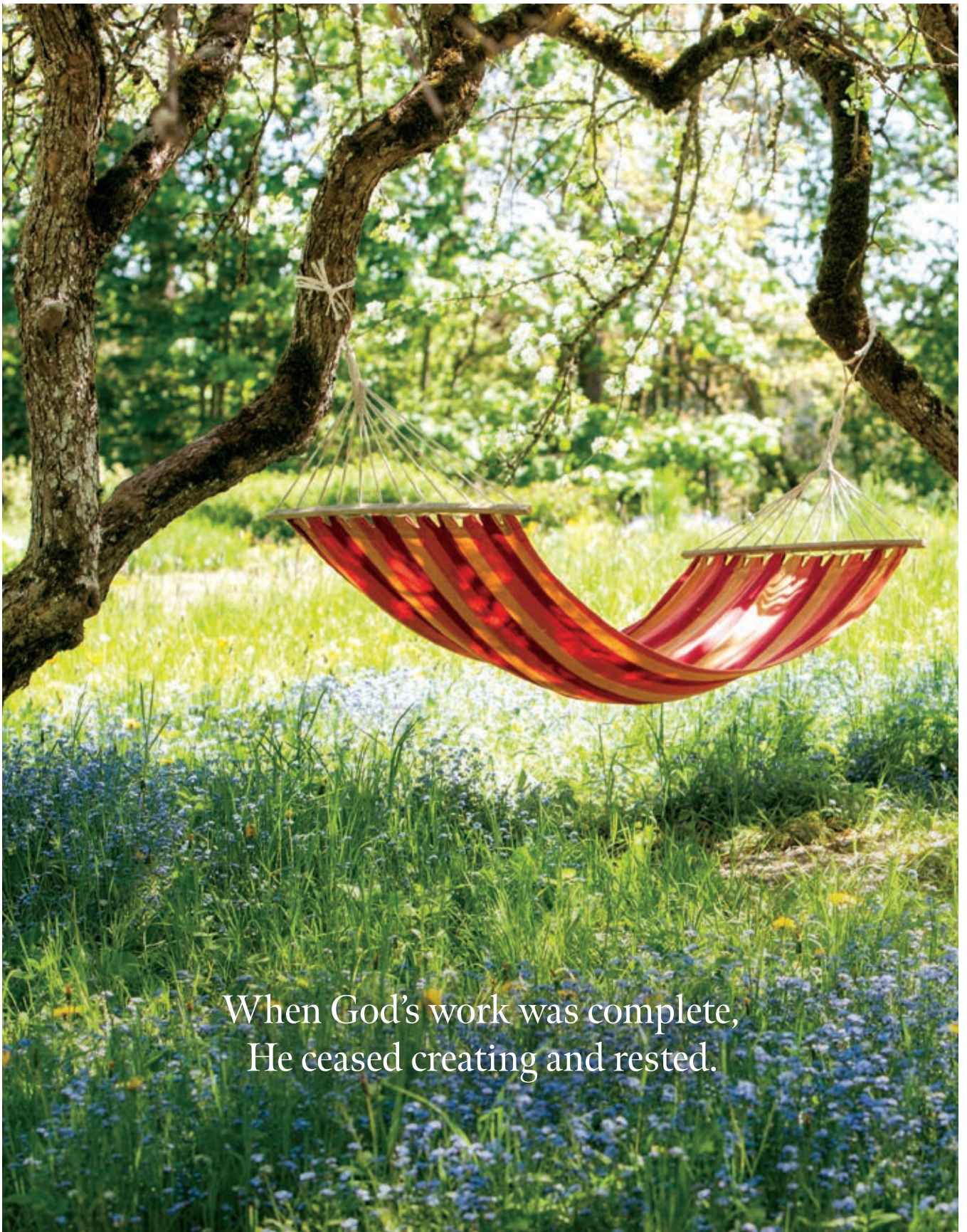
THE SEVENTH DAY

Perhaps you can relate to the sense of satisfaction and closure that comes when you've completed a major project, be it one that took several years (such as a degree) or several hours (such as gardening). With the work done, you can cease your effort and enjoy all the good that comes with its completion. This is the glimpse of God in Genesis 2:1-3. God's very good work was finished, so He stopped creating.

Three times in three verses the writer says some version of, "God did not work." After all of His creation work, God rested. God is pictured as creating to achieve the rest. Day seven of creation is not the appendix but the resolution to the creation story. That God blessed the day in the same way He blessed animals and humans tells us everything we need to know about the significance of this day and the importance of rest.

But how are we to rest? Even the theologically and biblically informed opinions vary, and each of those has many shades. The biblical practice of observing rest is called Sabbath. All forms of practicing Sabbath give us time and space to acknowledge the supremacy of God. To ignore Sabbath rest is to miss out on knowing and worshiping God.

Taking a Sabbath rest allows our bodies and minds to refresh, but our very need to rest also makes us keenly aware of the distinction between us and God. Rest is an opportunity for us to trust God to keep and sustain us as we cease from our labors.



When God's work was complete,
He ceased creating and rested.

REFLECTIONS

How are you currently practicing the blessing of Sabbath?

What aspects of life most frequently or most powerfully tempt you to neglect practicing the Sabbath in some way?

Do you view rest as something to look forward to or something you have to do?
How does this passage inform the way you should view rest?



DAY

6

PAUSE & LISTEN

Spend some time reflecting over the week's reading.

A vibrant, sun-drenched tropical forest scene. The image is filled with a variety of green plants, including large-leafed species in the foreground and dense foliage in the background. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a bright, airy atmosphere. The overall composition is rich and detailed, showcasing the beauty of a lush ecosystem.

In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

DAY
7

REFLECTION

Use these questions for personal reflection or group discussion on Genesis 1.

What stuck out to you most in this week's reading? What surprised you? Confused you?

What does this week's Scripture teach you about God and His character?

What does this week's Scripture teach you about humanity and our need for grace?

What do the origins of life, as described by the Bible, teach us about the meaning of life?

What steps of faith and obedience is God asking you to take through these Scriptures?

PRAY

God thank You for being the Creator of all that exists. We praise You for filling and sustaining us, even now.