

BREATH

the book of genesis

READ GENESIS 1:25-27 & GENESIS 2:4-9, 15-24. (LISTEN FOR WHAT THE NARRATIVE SAYS OR IMPLIES ABOUT GOD)

IT CAN BE EASY TO SKIP OVER THE BOOK OF GENESIS WHEN WE READ THE BIBLE. MANY OF US HAVE PROBABLY HEARD OR READ THESE NARRATIVES BEFORE, SO WE SOMETIMES TUNE THEM OUT WHEN THEY ARE READ AT MASS OR ASSIGNED AS REQUIRED READING.

BUT THIS SECTION OF GENESIS REVEALS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT WHO GOD IS AND WHY HE MATTERS. LET US TAKE A LOOK AT THE LINE, "GOD FORMED MAN OF DUST FROM THE GROUND, AND BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE; AND MAN BECAME A LIVING BEING." IN THIS SENTENCE ALONE, WE LEARN MANY THINGS ABOUT GOD.

FIRST OFF, WE KNOW THAT GOD CAN SEE AND FEEL — AND HE WORKS WITH THE EARTH TO CREATE. WE ALSO KNOW THAT GOD IS THE CREATOR; HE BREATHES LIFE INTO WHAT HE MADE. FURTHERMORE, GOD IS CLOSE AND PERSONAL. FROM ONE LINE, WE KNOW THAT GOD IS NOT DISTANT, DISCONNECTED, OR UNCARING.

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IN FACT, GOD IS SO CARING THAT HE NOT ONLY PLACES HUMANITY IN THE MOST PRIME LOCATION, BUT HE ALSO RECOGNIZES MAN'S NEED FOR COMMUNION WITH ANOTHER BEING AND THUS, CREATES A COMPANION FOR HIM: WOMAN.

God sees, knows, & provides

THIS IS A GOD WHO SEES, KNOWS, AND PROVIDES FOR HIS CREATION. HE SEES THAT ADAM IS LONELY, HE KNOWS WHAT ADAM LONGS FOR, AND HE PROVIDES FOR ADAM'S NEEDS. THIS IS A GOD WHO CARES FOR, SUSTAINS, AND INTERACTS WITH HIS CREATION. THIS IS THE SAME GOD WE CAN KNOW IN OUR LIVES.

GOD SEES US. NOT IN A CREEPY SANTA CLAUS WAY, BUT IN A REAL AND HONEST WAY. GOD SEES WHEN WE HAVE A ROUGH WEEK AT SCHOOL, JUST AS MUCH AS HE SEES WHEN WE SCORE THE GAMEWINNING GOAL. GOD IS THERE WITH US FOR THE GOOD AND BAD BECAUSE WE ARE HIS CREATION AND HE LOVES US.

OFTEN, WE FORGET HOW CLOSE GOD REALLY IS TO US AND HOW MUCH OUR EXISTENCE DEPENDS ON HIM. WE

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FORGET HOW WELL HE KNOWS OUR HEARTS AND LIVES. WE FORGET THAT WE MUST DEPEND ON HIM. THE CATECHISM TELLS US THAT WE WERE CREATED THROUGH LOVE AND ARE SUSTAINED BY THE LOVE OF GOD.

questions

1

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT GOD FROM THE GENESIS NARRATIVE?

2

IS THERE A TIME IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU EXPERIENCED BEING SEEN, KNOWN, OR CARED FOR BY GOD? IF SO, WHAT HAPPENED?

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our priorities

WE TEND TO FILL OUR DAYS WITH LOTS OF ACTIVITIES. BETWEEN SCHOOL, FRIENDS, SPORTS, AND HOMEWORK — NOT TO MENTION EATING AND SLEEPING — OUR LIVES ARE PRETTY BUSY. EACH YEAR SEEMS TO GO BY FASTER AND IT SEEMS LIKE OUR SCHEDULES KEEP GETTING BUSIER AND BUSIER. IN THE MIDST OF IT ALL, GOD CAN BECOME LESS OF A PRIORITY. OUR FAITH, PRAYER, AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD OFTEN TAKE A BACKSEAT TO EVERYTHING ELSE WE HAVE GOING ON. BUT THAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF THE LIFE GOD HAS PREPARED FOR US.

GOD LOVES US, BUT HE DOES NOT LOVE US LIKE WE LOVE TACOS. HE LOVES US IN A PROFOUND, LIFECHANGING WAY. HE LOVES US IN A WAY WE CAN ONLY GRADUALLY UNDERSTAND, WHICH IS WHY HE DESIRES THAT WE SPEND OUR LIVES GETTING TO KNOW HIM AND FALLING DEEPER IN LOVE WITH HIM. WE CANNOT FULLY LIVE UNLESS WE ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S LOVE AND ENTRUST OURSELVES TO HIM.

WE CAN FILL OUR LIVES WITH LOTS OF GREAT THINGS. WE CAN TRAVEL, WE CAN FALL IN LOVE, WE CAN SEE THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD, BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS

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CAN BE EXPERIENCED IN THEIR FULLNESS UNLESS WE RECEIVE AND RETURN GOD'S LOVE.

TO LIVE OUR LIVES ROOTED IN GOD'S LOVE MEANS WE RECEIVE HIS LOVE AND RETURN IT, WHICH CAN BE CHALLENGING IN THE MIDST OF OUR BUSY LIVES.

FIRST, WE NEED TO KNOW AND EMBRACE THE FACT THAT OUR IDENTITY IS IN CHRIST ALONE. OUR WHOLE LIFE — OUR WHOLE IDENTITY — IS ROOTED IN THE FACT THAT WE ARE BELOVED CHILDREN OF A GOOD FATHER. WHEN WE LIVE OUR LIVES ROOTED IN THIS LOVE, EVERYTHING CHANGES. IF WE BELIEVE WE ARE "THE BELOVED," WE NO LONGER STRIVE TO BE SOMETHING ELSE AND INSTEAD COME BEFORE GOD JUST AS WE ARE. WE TRUST HIS PLAN FOR OUR LIVES AND KNOW THAT HE WILL PROVIDE FOR US.

THIS IMPACTS THE WAY WE LIVE, LOVE, WORK, AND SPEAK. IT CHANGES HOW WE SPEND OUR TIME, MONEY, AND TALENT. IT CHANGES OUR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND TEXTS. IT CHANGES THE MOVIES AND SHOWS WE WATCH. NOT BECAUSE WE WANT GOD TO LIKE US, BUT BECAUSE WE TRUST HIM AND BELIEVE HIS WAY IS THE BEST WAY.

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questions

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WHY DO YOU THINK THE FULLNESS OF LIFE CAN ONLY BE EXPERIENCED WHEN WE RECEIVE & RETURN GOD'S LOVE?

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HAS RECEIVING & RETURNING GOD'S LOVE IMPACTED YOUR LIFE? IF SO, IN WHAT WAYS?

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right priorities

GOD ASKS TWO THINGS OF US: TO LOVE HIM ABOVE ALL THINGS AND TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES. HE ASKS US TO PUT THINGS IN ORDER. SAINT AUGUSTINE WOULD SAY, "TO ORDER OUR HEARTS RIGHTLY."

WHEN WE DO THIS — WHEN LOVE OF GOD IS FIRST — WE OPEN OURSELVES TO FULLNESS OF LIFE. GOD DOES NOT DESIRE A RELATIONSHIP WITH US TO BOOST HIS POPULARITY OR NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS. HE DESIRES A RELATIONSHIP WITH US FOR OUR OWN GOOD.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD, A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, CHANGES US BECAUSE HIS LOVE IS SO POWERFUL, SO GOOD, AND SO BEAUTIFUL THAT IT SHAPES HOW WE SEE AND KNOW THE WORLD. AND HERE IS THE CRAZY THING ABOUT GOD: EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS HE IS RIGHT, EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS THAT HIS WAY IS THE BEST WAY, HE LETS US CHOOSE. HE LETS US CHOOSE HOW TO "ORDER OUR LIVES."

THIS IS THE FREE CHOICE GOD PRESENTS US WITH. WE CAN CHOOSE LIFE IN ITS FULLEST FORM BY CHOOSING TO PUT GOD IN HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE, OR WE CAN CHOOSE

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DEATH BY PUTTING GOD ASIDE AND LIVING ONLY FOR OURSELVES.

AND THE GREAT PARADOX IS THIS: THE FULLEST LIFE SOMETIMES MEANS DEATH TO SELF. IN CHOOSING LIFE, WE HAVE TO DIE TO OUR SINS AND OUR WILL. AND THIS IS WHERE MANY PEOPLE WALK AWAY OR DECIDE THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WHEN THEY SEE THE DECISION LAID BEFORE THEM, THEY CHOOSE THEMSELVES OVER GOD — VERY MUCH LIKE ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN.

questions

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WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE CHOOSE NOT TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

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DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO "DIE TO YOURSELF" (CHOOSING GOD & OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELF)?

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Lessons from Adam & Eve

READ GENESIS CHAPTER 3.

WE CAN LEARN A LOT FROM ADAM AND EVE. FIRST, YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM GOD IN A GARDEN HE CREATED. SECOND, ADAM AND EVE CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD. THEY CHOSE TO TRY TO BE GOD INSTEAD OF TRUSTING IN HIS LOVE AND PROVIDENCE AND BEING OBEDIENT TO HIM. THEY FORGOT WHO THEY WERE AS BELOVED CHILDREN, AND WHO GOD IS AS A GOOD FATHER.

WE OFTEN DO THE SAME THING! WE WANT OUR WILL AND OUR WAY. WE WANT CONTROL OVER OUR LIVES. WE DO NOT WANT TO TRUST GOD OR WE DO NOT THINK HE IS WORTH TRUSTING.

THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT KEEP US AWAY FROM HIM, THAT KEEP US FROM LOVING HIM WITH ALL OF OUR HEART. WE ARE AFRAID GOD WILL ASK US TO GIVE UP SOMETHING THAT WE DO NOT WANT OR FEEL READY TO GIVE UP. WE WORRY THAT HE WILL CALL US TO SOMETHING WE DO NOT WANT TO DO. WE THINK HE COULD NOT LOVE US BECAUSE OF OUR SIN.

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BUT GOD, IN HIS GOODNESS, DOES LOVE US. HE ONLY ASKS US TO GIVE UP THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO BE BAD FOR US IN THE LONG RUN. HE CALLS US TO GREATNESS — TO WHAT HE KNOWS WE WERE MADE FOR — AND LOVES US MORE THAN WE COULD EVER IMAGINE.

ADAM AND EVE'S EXPERIENCE AND CHOICES IN THE GARDEN ALSO TEACH US ABOUT OUR HEARTS. ARE WE GRASPING AT SOMETHING GOD HAS ASKED US NOT TO REACH FOR AT THIS TIME? ARE WE LISTENING TO VOICES THAT ARE LEADING US ASTRAY? ARE WE STANDING UP FOR TRUTH WHEN OUR FRIENDS ARE DRIFTING AWAY FROM GOD? ARE WE HIDING FROM GOD BECAUSE WE HAVE DONE SOMETHING WRONG? ARE WE PLACING BLAME FOR OUR MISTAKES ON SOMEONE ELSE?

GENESIS CHAPTER THREE, ADAM AND EVE'S DEPARTURE FROM THE GARDEN, ALSO TEACHES US ABOUT GOD. WHILE HE HAS TO ENFORCE THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM AND EVE'S ACTIONS, HE DOES SO WITH MERCY. HE MAKES CLOTHES FOR THEM, CARINGLY SEEKS THEM OUT, AND CONTINUES TO WATCH OVER THEM AFTER THEIR EXILE.

GOD IS CALLING YOU BY NAME TO SEEK HIM, TO COME TO KNOW HIM, AND TO LIVE YOUR LIFE FOR HIM. THE MORE

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YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU WILL RECEIVE. ULTIMATELY, WE CAN CHOOSE A FULL, ABUNDANT LIFE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD OR WE CAN CHOOSE TO SIMPLY WALK AWAY.

questions

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HOW CAN YOU RELATE TO THE EXPERIENCE & CHOICES OF ADAM & EVE IN THE GARDEN? WHAT STOPS YOU FROM H

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WHAT STOPS YOU FROM HAVING THE FULLEST RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?