



GENESIS

Foundations for Life and Work

Part I : Chapters 1–11

Leader's Guide

YOUNG BUSINESS LEADERS

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GENESIS – *Foundations For Life and Work*

How to use this book: The goal of this workbook is to help you have greater success in your personal study and application of the Bible. During the week, you should read through the lesson questions, and then read the text and attempt to answer the questions in preparation for your small group. The lined pages on the right hand side are given to provide room for your answers.

In the actual group you may choose to cover all the questions of the study (which may result in the group taking longer than seven weeks) or the group leader may select 2–4 specific questions that they believe will be most profitable for discussion. Please use the method which is most fruitful for your group!

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LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

Why Genesis 1–11 Forms a Crucial Foundation

Introduction: The word Genesis means “beginnings”. This book was written by Moses, and shared with the people of Israel during their 40 years living in the wilderness.

Prior to their 40 years in the wilderness of the Middle East, the Israelites were a people who had lived for 400 years as slaves of Egypt. Most of the Israelites did not really know God. They did not truly understand themselves. But God had chosen their forefather Abraham and called him from idolatry, and made a promise to him (Genesis 12:1–3). The Israelites, as Abraham’s children, had been chosen specifically to reveal to the entire world God’s goodness and His purposes. They were about to enter a land (Canaan, which is modern day Israel) which was steeped in idolatry. The Canaanites had many false answers about things like, “Who controls the rain?” or “Who do our children belong to?” or “How do we please the gods?” Coming from a land of idolatry (Egypt), and going to a land of idolatry (Canaan), the Israelites desperately needed to know the truth about the basic questions of the world.

In this book of Genesis, God inspired Moses to teach the Israelites the true history of the world. Yet this book is not a mere collection of information, but specifically collected and gathered history to teach foundational truths necessary for wise living. This book was given to teach the Israelites (and through them, us) four things:

- 1) Who God really is.
- 2) For what purpose God created men.
- 3) How that purpose went astray, and why the world is full of suffering.
- 4) How God is at work to heal this broken world.

Despite all the technological advancement in our present day, we do not seem to be getting closer to answering the really important questions. In general, we are just as confused and divided over the purpose of life. Do we exist to maximize productivity? If so, how do you measure “productivity”? Was man created at all, or are we just a product of random processes? Are we in our current form just a stepping stone to a more evolved being? Do we really have purpose? Does life have real meaning, or just arbitrary goals we create for ourselves?

This becomes very practical for us in the business world. Why do we work? What are the ways we measure success? Is work good, or is it more of a necessary evil? What are the motivations for excellence in our work?

If these questions matter to you, take heart. There are real answers. It is to find these answers that God gave us the first book of the Bible. God desires you to know Him. God wants you to know what your purpose is in life. He wants your heart to sing in the work you do and to trust Him for what it produces. By God's grace, these eleven chapters of Genesis may greatly help to accomplish those purposes.

Questions:

1. Who wrote the book of Genesis, and who was the original audience for this book?
2. What about the situation of the original audience made answering the question of their origins urgent and important?
3. What four key ideas does the book of Genesis teach?
4. Which of those is most intriguing to you today, and why?
5. What is your biggest question about work right now?

1. Moses was the author.

The audience was the nation of Israel (2-3 million people), encamped in the wilderness on the plains of Moab, preparing to enter the land of Canaan (the land God promised to Israel).

2. The people were coming from a land of false beliefs (Egypt) and entering a land of false beliefs (Canaan). The people of Israel needed to understand the true foundations and purpose of the world and of their people, so that they could begin their nation on what was good and true and of lasting value.

3. This book, among many other lessons, teaches four key ideas:

1) Who God really is.

2) For what purpose God created men.

3) How that purpose went astray, and why the world is full of so much suffering.

4) How God is at work to heal this broken world.

LESSON 2: GENESIS 1—2:3

God, the Master Craftsman

In preparation for this lesson: Read Genesis 1:1–2:3

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:1–2

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

*So 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 and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 1:26–31

1. Consider Genesis 1:1. Who created the world? Who, therefore, does the world belong to, and for whom does it exist? (See also Colossians 1:15–18)
2. Reflect on the answer to the first question. How does that shape life today and explain the meaning of life?
3. As God is creating, almost like a musical refrain, He also reflects on the quality of His work. What does He say about His work (look at verses 12b, 18b, 21b, 25b, 31)? What does that say about the essential nature of physical world?

1. God created the world. As a result, it belongs to Him and it exists for Him. This answer may seem absolutely obvious and mundane. However, to settle the answer to that question upfront orients all of life in far reaching ways.

2. Since God is the creator, and therefore creation exists by and for Him, whatever meaning our life has must relate to God and His purposes. Any attempt to define the meaning and purpose of our life and work apart from God is missing its foundation.

3. God sees that His work is good. In fact in verse 31, reflecting over its totality, God says it was “very good”. The physical world, in its essence, is a good thing. This is important because so many religions, and even some in the Christian faith look at the physical world as suspect, as if matter was fundamentally sinful. Such distortions encourage spiritual abstraction and indifference, or even hostility, towards the body as an obstacle to a relationship with God. God created the physical world and values it. Therefore we should value it also.

4. Reflect on the variety and scope of God’s creation. Consider the incredible intricacy of each created thing (DNA and the crystalline structures of snowflakes), and the vast expanse of the heavens, millions of light years across, with stars the size of a billion earths. What does creation teach you about God?

5. In Genesis 1:26, God says, “Let us make man in our own image”. The Hebrew word is Elohim, which is a plural form. Is God one or is He many?

6. Consider Genesis 2:1–3. On the seventh day, God rests from His work. Do you think God was tired? Why do you think He rested? What is the significance of this?

BUSINESS BLOCK

How does the knowledge that God is the creator and the master craftsman impact your perspective on human activity and business? How does it impact your thoughts on profits? How about stakeholders in your organization?

For Further Reflection and Discussion

Some (such as Meredith Kline) have noticed a pattern in God’s order of creation. For example:

Day 1, God creates light.

Day 2, God creates the sky and seas.

Day 3, God creates land.

Day 4, God creates the Sun and moon to govern the light.

Day 5, God creates the birds and fish to rule sky and sea.

Day 6, God creates animals to rule the land.

Then, lastly on Day 6, God creates man special, with the purpose of ruling over all of creation.

This might be unfamiliar. Do you think there is something to it? If so, reflect on the creation story and what this is trying to teach about spheres of authority and dominion.

4. God is a being of immense power, and also of boundless creativity. He delights in variety—not just one kind of fish or person, but many kinds—thus the overlapping and unique DNA pairing that happens in each person. He loves beauty and created so many different kinds of it—snowcapped mountain peaks and roaring waves, hopping squirrels and majestic creatures like the lion and blue whale. As unfathomable as creation is, God is greater still, to have conceived of it and carried out its work. Everything we love about the world and the universe ought to bring us to a greater appreciation of God as the artist that shaped it.

5. This here is one of the first indications of the nature of God as triune. Here the persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all engaged in the work of creation and fellowship together. Deuteronomy 6:4, called the Shema (The Name) is regarded as the most important verse in the Old Testament, affirms the singularity of God—“Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the LORD is one.” God is one being dwelling in three persons, equal in power and glory. This is the mystery of the trinity, and it dwells in scripture from the very beginning.

6. God was not tired. He rested because God was setting a pattern for all of creation and for man, that this rhythm of rest, 1 day in 7, was built into the fabric of creation. God did this for us, so that we would rest and receive it as one of His gifts in creation – godly rest and re-creation.

LESSON 3: GENESIS 1:26–2:25

Man, Designed for Dominion and Partnership

In preparation for this lesson: Read Genesis 1:26–2:25

*So 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 and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on
the earth.”*

Genesis 1:27–28

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it
and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely
eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

*Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will
make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the LORD God had
formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them
to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every
living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to
the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was
not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall
upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place
with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made
into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,*

*“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”*

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife,
and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked
and were not ashamed.*

Genesis 2:18–25

1A. Man is described as being made in God's image. Though all of His creation bears the mark of His creativity and has been fashioned by Him, nothing else in all of creation is described as being made in God's image. Therefore man has a unique place in the creation of God. He is distinct from animals and distinctly valuable.

1B. Man is also described as being created in two genders, male and female. This demonstrates the equality of men and women as they are equally described as God's image. It also demonstrates that it was God's purpose to making two distinct sexes of humanity. This plurality and complementarity points to something else about the image of God; as we saw in lesson 1, God is both three and yet one. Humanity reflects something of God's own unity and diversity by being male and female, and yet one human race.

2A. Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. God created Adam and Eve. He could have created the world already populated with all the people and animals he wanted. Yet it pleased God to allow mankind to join him in the work of extending creation from the garden to the whole world. God created two image bearers to His name—but it will be to their joy and His glory that there will be many who bear his image, just as a king or leader or influential person is more honored if there are many statues and street signs and buildings that bear their name. This foundational command is repeated to Noah (Genesis 9:1 & 9:7), Abraham (Genesis 17:6), Jacob (Genesis 28:3, 35:11, 48:4), the nation of Israel (Leviticus 26:9, Exodus 1:7), and ultimately to those who follow Jesus (Matthew 28:20). God loves people and wants there to be many on the earth who bear His image and glorify His name.

2B. Subdue it—have dominion over the fish and birds and all living things on the earth. Notice the balance in the word dominion. Mankind is to rule over creation, not merely be another animal that coexists on the earth. We were created to be dominant (form of the word dominion) on the earth. At the same time, we are stewards of the earth. We are created under God's authority and tasked with the responsibility of cultivating and caring for creation so that it will be released and become even more fruitful. It is similar to a gardener who trims away dead portions of a plant and shapes it so it can be more productive and healthy. As such, the Biblical perspective on the role of man avoids both a pillaging mindset (where the earth is stripped and destroyed of its resources and future fruitfulness) and a worship of creation (where man is viewed as an invasive species that needs to minimize its impact). God created mankind to have a dramatic and positive impact on the earth.

In this lesson we will go back over some of the ground we covered in lesson 1, because last time we looked at Genesis 1 primarily in terms of what it teaches about God. This lesson will focus on what creation teaches about man and woman and their role in creation and cultivation.

1. Consider the short poem in Genesis 1:27. What two key details are given about the creation of man? What significant applications can we draw from each?
 2. Consider Genesis 1:28. What are the two missions which God gives to mankind? Explain.
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BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider your vocation. In what ways does your work help to accomplish this twofold command of filling the earth and exercising honorable stewardship over creation?

3. Look at Genesis 2:18–20. Man is initially alone. God brings the animals to Adam to be named.
 - A) What is the significance of Adam naming the animals?
 - B) It makes clear in verse 18 that God wanted to create a suitable helper for Adam. Why did God take Adam through the process of naming the animals before creating Eve?
 4. Genesis 2:24–25 explain the significance of Adam and Eve’s union as it pertains to the institution of marriage. Look up Mark 10:6–9. Jesus quotes this passage, and then makes an application from it. What conclusion does Jesus make about marriage?
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BUSINESS BLOCK

The word, “Vocation” literally means something you are called to do. According to Genesis 1, who does the calling? Do you perceive your current job as a calling? Why or why not?

3A. This is Adam's first job as God's steward. If you name something, you have authority over it. (For example, I cannot name your dog or your children, unless you let me!). Adam is exercising dominion over creation.

3B. God takes Adam through this process so he will recognize his need. This is the first time it is said something was not good (i.e., It is not good for man to be alone). This serves to increase Adam's joy as he recognizes the excellence and beauty of the helper that God makes for him. Adam breaks out in the first human poem in celebration—'This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man'.

BUSINESS BLOCK

This can be a challenging question. Accountants bring order and cultivation to transactions and business. Salespeople help to establish relationships and connections that enable flourishing through partnership. Managers help to organize and mobilize people to achieve their potential and be more fruitful than they would be without such direction. Every job connects to these commands in some way—the challenge is to spend time thinking about how.

4. Jesus makes the application, "What God has joined together, let man not separate." The point is, since marriage was instituted by God and given as His gift, we have no right to break apart that which He established. This is true for those who would seek to break up the marriages of others, and it is also true for those who would break their own marriages. The result is a very high view of the value of marriage, and its (earthly) permanence.

BUSINESS BLOCK

God is the one who does the calling. The key here in discussion is to realize that all work, not merely professional ministry work, is initiated by the God who calls us to be His images, to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue and have dominion over the earth. All work is therefore sacred. The big challenge for most of us is to recognize that work as an accountant or salesperson or manager is sacred work, and should be pursued with the highest standard of excellence and care.

LESSON 4: GENESIS 3-5

Sin Breaks the World — Its Effects and God's Grace

In preparation for this lesson: Read Genesis 3-5.

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Genesis 2:16-17

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

Genesis 3:1-7

To the serpent He said... I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Genesis 3:15–20

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 4:25–26

As the previous lessons focused on God's character and His design and purpose for people, this chapter focuses on how sin and brokenness entered the world. It further observes God's gracious response in preserving his people and promising the hope of future deliverance from their sin.

1. Consider Genesis 3:1–7. The serpent is described as crafty. How does he subtly twist God's words and encourage Eve to do so, before he flatly denies what God promised (3:4)? How does the serpent make the fruit seem inviting?
2. What are the effects of this sin?
3. Read Romans 5:12–19. How does this section help us to understand how the first sin of Adam was unique?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Notice that in Genesis 3:17, the ground is cursed, rather than work. What does that say about the nature of work?

4. Read chapter 4. The sin of Adam plays out in their children, Cain and Abel. What happens to Cain's family? Who is Seth, and how is he important to the statement in 4:26, "Then men began to call on the name of the LORD".
5. Look at chapter 5. This is the genealogy of Adam to Noah. The length of the lives is astounding. Yet there is a consistent sort of poetic refrain. How does each paragraph and person's story end?

1. First, the serpent says “Did God really keep you from eating from any tree in the garden?” God had not prohibited eating from all the trees—only one had been excluded. Secondly when Eve tries to recite the prohibition about the one tree, she adds something to it—that in addition to not eating the fruit, they were not allowed to touch the tree. In verse 5, the serpent makes the fruit appear attractive by suggesting that God has withheld some good thing from Adam and Eve (the knowledge of good and evil), and this fruit can give that good thing to them. It is a strange lie, for they already knew and experienced good. Knowing evil would only create sorrow, pain and death. Notice that temptation thrives off exaggeration and rationalization. At the root, sin refuses to believe God. Sin refuses to believe that God’s purposes and timing are best for us.

2. Adam and Eve realize they are naked—they have shame (see Genesis 2:25/3:7). As a result, they try to hide from God (Genesis 3:10) and their relationship with Him is broken. Childbearing will become much more painful (Genesis 3:16). Marriage will degrade from harmonious partnership to power struggle (Genesis 3:16) and the ground is cursed (Genesis 3:17-19) so that it will no longer bear fruit in the abundance it once was. Adam and Eve lose their place in the garden (Genesis 3:23-24), and their second son kills their first (Genesis 4:8)—the first sin begets more sin. Death enters the world (4:8,5:5,5:8,5:11, etc.)

Notice particularly the two specific curses on Adam and Eve. These curses strike at the heart of their ability to carry out the purposes for which God made them. The curse on childbearing and marriage makes it harder to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The curse on the ground makes it more difficult for man to take dominion over creation and to subdue it.

Notice both Adam and Jesus were representative heads of humanity. Adam’s first sin was a defining moment. It shaped his character and all his descendants as sinners, justly under the sentence of death which God spoke in Genesis 2:17—“For the day you eat of the tree, you will surely die.” The first sin caused all to sin, as the saying goes, “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all.” The good news of Romans 5:19 is this, just as one man cursed the human race, Jesus has, for everyone who believes, paid the penalty of sin and is even now undoing all of the damage sin produced.

For Further Reflection and Discussion

Couched in the curse which God delivers to the serpent (Genesis 3:14–15) is a remarkable word of hope. God declares that as the snake attacks the heel, one of Eve's children will crush his head. This is why the preservation of a righteous line that 'calls on the name of the LORD' through Seth and Noah is so important. Jesus Christ, the distant son of Adam, Seth and Noah has crushed the head of the serpent and taken away the power of death by disarming sin. Through Jesus we have the promise that the depressing reality and refrain of Genesis 5, 'and then he died', has been finally broken.

BUSINESS BLOCK

As we saw from Genesis 1-2, God is a worker and a craftsman. Man made in His image was also created to work. Work was and remains a fundamentally good thing. The cursing of the ground means that now the good work we do often fails to be as fruitful or successful as it otherwise would. This is important to affirm in a world that often acts as if work is itself evil and to be avoided. On the contrary, work is foundationally satisfying and meaningful—it is the fall which causes the pain we experience from work.

4. After killing Abel, Cain's family grows more wild and rebellious. Lamech is included to demonstrate how corrupt Cain's descendants became—whereas God mercifully promised to protect Cain and preserve his life after he murdered Abel, Lamech murders a young man for offending him—and then claims the same promise sevenfold. It is a picture of wicked, high-handed rebellion and evil. The line of Cain has grown corrupt and godless, a law unto themselves.

Seth is the child that God gives Adam and Eve to replace the righteous and murdered Abel. Seth and Enosh are a contrast to the wicked line of Cain, which did not regard God at all. Once God provided Adam and Eve with a godly son in Seth, “Men began to call on the name of the LORD”. Seth's line, which will be Noah's line, is the righteous line—even though the individuals may be far from righteous in their conduct at times.

5. The continuous refrain is, “x lived so many years, had other sons and daughters, and then they died.” Though God in His grace has preserved Adam and Eve and did not kill them the day that they sinned in the garden, death is a reality of sin. Death is the reminder that there is a persistent problem that needs to be addressed in men.

LESSON 5: GENESIS 6–9:17

The Flood: Worldwide Rebellion and God’s Preservation

In Preparation: Read Genesis 6–9:17

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”

Genesis 6:5–7 (NAS)

The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Genesis 8:21 (NAS)

The worldwide rebellion against God grows so intense that God brings about the judgment of mankind and the earth in a consuming flood. The objective of this lesson is to understand why the flood happened, what it accomplished, and what the flood could not accomplish.

1. Read Genesis 6:5–7. Why did God intend to “blot out man” from the earth?
2. Read Genesis 8:21. After the flood occurs, why did God say he would never again curse the ground because of man?
3. How do we make sense out of these two answers?
4. In Genesis 8:20–9:17, God makes a covenant with Noah. The chief element of this promise is one of preservation. Why would that be so significant, given all we have observed, both in this and previous lessons?
5. What is the difference between mercy and leniency? Is God merciful or lenient towards sin?

1. Because the intent of his heart is evil from his youth.

2. Because the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.

3. There is no contradiction here. Rather, this points out something very fundamental and significant about the judgment of the flood. The flood occurred because of the wickedness of sin, but not as a cure for it. God in his righteousness had to demonstrate His divine displeasure at sin, or He would appear to be condoning it. Without such a demonstration, wickedness would be even more emboldened and multiplied over the earth. However, sin is so deeply rooted in the heart of man, it cannot be extinguished through judgment without wiping out all mankind. There must be another way of righteousness.

4. Because of man's sin, he justly deserves to die (Genesis 2:17). God's righteousness demands that He punish sin (Romans 3:26), or He would be unjust. This promise to preserve mankind is a patient grace, which creates time for God to work out his plan to rescue and heal the human race in another way.

5. Leniency is the idea that somebody has rules which they do not enforce. It could be like the "Blue Laws" still on the books in many states, where there were penalties for card playing on Sundays. It could be those places where the speed limit says 65, but you will never get a ticket unless you are going 80.

Mercy is different. The rules are real, and breaking them has a real cost. When someone extends true mercy, they absorb the cost themselves. This is important because God is merciful, not lenient. Anytime His laws are violated, there is a cost. The only question that remains is, who will pay the cost? As God extends patience to Noah and His family, He has not forgotten His righteousness. He will one day demonstrate His righteousness and judgment against sin as He pours out his wrath on His own Son through the cross (See Romans 3:21-27, esp 25-27).

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider the difficulty of maintaining both mercy and justice. Can you think of occasions in your work and family life where it was complex to think through the right thing to do? How do you think you did? Would you do some things differently now?

6. Look at Genesis 9:8–17. God provides a sign to confirm His covenant promise to preserve the earth, and never again to destroy it through a worldwide flood. What is the sign that He gives? How is it a fitting symbol?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Issues can arise with employees who fail in performance or ethics in their jobs—do you just fire them or give them another chance? How many chances? With what restrictions or caveats? Issues can arise with customers who are slow pay or vendors who underperformed—do you show them mercy or enforce the letter of the law? When your children break rules, how many chances do they get before they get punished? In cases of ongoing disobedience, what sort of a scale of increasing punishments do you use? All of this is not clearly spelled out in scripture, though the principles are present. The application of those principles calls for wisdom. That leads us to humility and seeking God in prayer and greater knowledge of His Word.

6. The sign is the rainbow. Some might think of this as a flowery and feminine sort of symbol, but this is not a bow like the kind that goes on a present. It is a bow that a warrior would use for battle. God looks at His bow and remembers His promises not to destroy (as if He could forget!) We see His bow as well---and we remember that though our sins justly deserve the judgment of God's wrath, for the time being, it is hung up—and not pointed at us. This is because of His mercy.

LESSON 6: GENESIS 9:18–11:32

Ongoing Rebellion & God's Design

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.

Genesis 9:20–22

And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

Genesis 11:3–4

Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there.

Genesis 11:31

In this lesson, we will see confirmation that the flood did not fix the fundamental problem of the heart of man, and how God continues to enact His long range plan to redeem mankind.

1. Right after the remarkable and gracious promise of the covenant and sign of the rainbow (Genesis 9:8–17), we see signs of trouble returning. What are the evidences of evil conduct in chapter 9?

For Consideration & Reflection

Consider Genesis Chapter 10. Genealogies and lists can be some of the most challenging parts of the Bible to understand. This chapter makes clear that God created all the nations and people. Yahweh is the God over all the earth and there is not a person or people group that did not come from His hand.

2. In chapter 11, we see another example of rebellion against God. Reread Genesis 1:28 and 9:1. What is wrong about the desire of the people in Genesis 11:4 when they say, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth”?

1. Even though Noah was the righteous man whose family was particularly preserved by God, he gets drunk to the point he passed out. Then one of his children shamed him deeply. (The euphemism of ‘exposing his nakedness’ in verse 22 probably means something even more shameful than mocking his father. That is why the judgment that falls on him and his son Canaan is so severe.)

2. The command God gave the people was to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth as His image bearers. These people want to build a city. There is nothing wrong, by itself, in the activity of building a city—something which many of us desire and labor to do. It is the motivation they have for wanting to build the city that is wrong. This rebellion against God shows up in two ways:

I) To avoid being dispersed over the earth—they want to huddle together, rather than obey God’s command to fill and settle the earth as He called them to in Genesis 1:28 & 9:1.

II) To make a name for themselves—they want to bring honor and glory to themselves, rather than to bring honor and glory to God’s name, in whose image they have been made (Genesis 1:26).

3. In response to their rebellion, God intervenes (Genesis 11:7–9). How does He stop their plan, and how does this end up accomplishing His purposes?

4. In Genesis 11:6, God says of the peoples' plan of the tower of Babel, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them." Do you think God was afraid of the people? What does this mean?

5. We see another genealogy in 11:10–28, similar to the one in Genesis 5. What do you notice is different here? What do you think might be the point of this genealogy?

6. At the conclusion of Genesis 11, the story begins to focus on this man, Terah, who begins to move his family from Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Canaan. Terah's son is Abram. From this point forward, the focus of Genesis will be on this family. That might seem strange. Why would a book that is written for every human being on earth focus on this family? (Look at Genesis 12:3 for a clue).

BUSINESS BLOCK

Has there ever been a "Babel moment" in your life or work, where God disrupted a plan that kept you from sinning against Him? How? Take time to thank God for those situations that did not happen because of His disruptive mercy.

3. *God confuses their languages. This results in it being impossible for them to communicate, which results in confusion and chaos. As a result, people begin to spread out over all the earth, just as God commanded. This is only the first step, however, because the earth may be getting filled with image bearers, but they are not consciously honoring God or in right relationship with Him.*

4. *No, God is not afraid! God here observes that the worldwide rebellion which He just disrupted through the flood is beginning all over again. To avoid this rebellion from becoming truly organized (and thus requiring another massive judgment), God purposes to disrupt the plan. This will help to provide the time which God promised to Noah, and the opportunity for God to work His plan to rescue men from sin and themselves.*

5. *The years of the people are growing shorter. We do not know why, if conditions changed after the flood or some other reason. But the curse of death remains heavy on men. Several purposes of this genealogy are to maintain and complete the righteous line that connects Adam and Seth to Noah and then to Terah and Abram. This is the righteous line God is preserving. For what purpose we do not know yet in the text, but the people reading it would see their family history.*

6. *The promise to Abram is that all of the families of the earth will be blessed through Him. This promise will follow his children, from Issac, to Jacob (renamed Israel), to David, and ultimately through Jesus Christ. Jesus would be the Savior of not only Jewish people, but all who believe, from all nations. He is the one who crushes the head of the serpent by absorbing the wrath of God against sin. God's plan for fixing the damage of sin will be done through Abraham's family, which will become the nation of Israel. This is why the book of Matthew chapter 1 begins with the genealogy, to help us see this connection.*

LESSON 7: CONCLUSION

Summarizing the Key Lessons of Genesis 1–11

1. What does Genesis 1 teach you about God?
 2. What does Genesis 1:26–28 & Genesis 2 teach you about man?
 3. What does Genesis 3 explain about the trouble we see in the world?
 4. Why did the flood occur? Did the flood fix the brokenness in the world?
 5. What was the core promise in the covenant made with Noah after the flood? What was the sign which sealed that promise?
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BUSINESS BLOCK

What parts of Genesis 1–11 have been most helpful to you as you consider your job and your purpose? Does it cause you to look differently at your work or evaluate the work you are doing in a new way?

How does understanding the fall and its effects help you to make sense out of your experience?

For Further Reflection

It is clear from the story of Noah that we do not just need a new start—we need a new heart to live a transformed life. Read Galatians 3:23, Matthew 5:17 and Romans 3:21–27. What has God done that produces the change which our best efforts cannot?

1. God is the creator—therefore we have responsibility to Him as our maker. God is a master craftsman and a worker—He builds with great intricacy and delight in His work. God made the world very good.

2. We were created good, in God's image. We were made to work—to be fruitful and fill the earth, to cultivate and care for creation as God's stewards. We reflect God's image in our variety and complexity, made male and female.

3. The trouble in the world is the result of sin. It has damaged our relationships, and child bearing and child rearing are more difficult and painful. It has damaged the ground, so that our work has become more painful and less fruitful. Sickness and death are in the world as a result of our sin.

4. The flood occurred because of sin and rebellion—God must punish sin so as to restrain it. The flood did not fix the brokenness of the world because sin and rebellion is within every human heart.

5. The core promise was one of preservation and patience. God would in His patience wait to judge sin until the fullness of time. This enables him to work His plan of redemption through Noah's descendants—as we saw in Genesis 3:15, one of the offspring (seed) of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. This is the promise which will one day bring Jesus to earth.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTING

Galatians 3:23—The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

Matthew 5:17—Jesus says e did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.

Romans 3:21-27—It is clear though we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory, Jesus has come to take our place. God did this so that He might be just—and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Every person, descended from Adam, is a sinner. We cannot be good enough. Jesus has done what we could not. As we have faith in Jesus, His death takes our penalty. His sacrifice becomes our righteousness. God looks on us and no longer sees our sin, but rather Jesus' perfect life.

