

First, God. God is the subject of life. God is foundational for living. If we don't have a sense of the primacy of God, we will never get it right, get life right, get our lives right. Not God at the margins; not God as an option; not God on the weekends. God at the center and circumference; God first and last; God, God, God.

Genesis gets us off on the right foot. Genesis pulls us into a sense of reality that is God-shaped and God-filled. It gives us a vocabulary for speaking accurately and comprehensively about our lives, where we come from and where we are going, what we think and what we do, the we live with and how to get along with them, the troubles we find ourselves in and the blessings that keep arriving.

Genesis used words to make a foundation that is solid and true. Everything we think and do and feel is material in a building operation in which we are engaged all our life long. There is immense significance in everything we do. Our speech and our actions and our prayers are all, every detail of them, involved in the vast building operation comprehensively known as the Kingdom of God. But we don't build the foundation. the Foundation is given. The foundation is firmly in place.

Jesus concluded his most famous teaching by telling us that there are two ways to go about our lives- we can build on sand or we can build on rock. No matter how wonderfully we build, if we build on sand it will all fall to pieces like a house of cards. We build on what is already there, on the rock. Genesis is a verbal witness to that rock: God's creative acts, God's intervening and gracious judgments, God's call to a life of faith, God's making covenant with us.

But Genesis presents none of this to us as an abstract, bloodless "truth" or "principle." We are given a succession of stories with named people, people who loved and quarreled, believed and doubted, had children and married, experienced sin and grace. If we pay attention, we find that we ourselves are living variations on these very stories: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and his sons, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers. The stories show clearly that we are never outsiders or spectators to anything in "heaven and earth." God doesn't work impersonally from space; he works with us where we are, as he finds us. No matter what we do, whether good or bad, we continue to be part of everything that God is doing. Nobody can drop out-there's no place to drop out to. So we may as well get started and take our place in the story- at the beginning.

For more information on Genesis visit:

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-genesis/>

READ Genesis 1.1-2.4

Opening

- What time of day are you most creative? (Are you an early bird or a night owl?) Do you get more done on your “day off” or on “work time”? Do projects wait for a “rainy day” or vacation?
- If you could create a new animal, what would it be like? What would its most important feature be? Why? What would you call it?

Digging in — Discovering the Word

- What repeated words or phrases do you observe in Genesis 1? What does this pattern tell you about the order of creation? Its author? Its purpose? Its climax? Its goodness? Its completeness?
- Why does God first form the world (days 1-3) and then fill that world (days 4-6)?
 - In what ways do God's creative commands during the first three days add form to the formless earth (1:3-13)?
 - How do God's commands during the next three days add fullness to the empty earth (1:14-25)?
- In what ways do you think God views his creation as being good (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25)?
- In what ways are man and woman unique among God's creation (1:26-27)?
- What special commands and provisions does God give to the man and woman in his creation (1:28-31)?
- According to 1:26, the man and woman are made in the image and likeness of God. What similarities are there between God's own work in creation and the commands and responsibilities he gives to the man and woman?
- What does John 1.1-3 add to your perception of Genesis 1.1-3 and 26? Read Colossians 1.15-20, what is Christ's role in creation? And how does Genesis help you appreciate the nature and work of Christ?
- For a believer's life and worship, what does it mean that God finishes his work in six days and rests on the seventh (See Exodus 20.8-11)?
- Why do you think the Bible tells us that God created but does not tell us exactly how he created? What does this tell you about the relative importance of the who and how of creation?

Connecting the Dots — Applying the Word

- The creation account reveals that God brings order, beauty and harmony out of an originally chaotic situation. In what areas do you need to trust God to produce these qualities in your life?
- According to Romans 1.20-25 and Hebrews 11.1-3, what should be our response to God's self-revelation in the created order? What are the consequences for refusing to praise the Creator?
- How aware are you of the created world in your everyday life? What aspect of the created world is most inspiring to you? Why? How does it affect your understanding of God?
- What does it mean to you to be created in God's image? How does knowing this affect how you feel about yourself? About your body? How should this affect your relationship with God? With other people?
- How does this story of creation affect the way you treat the land, water, plants and animals in God's world? What can you do to help protect the beauty, diversity and fragility of the world God created?

Prayer: Thank God for the magnificence of his creation and for allowing you to play such an important role in it.

(adapted from IVP Press Daily Bible Study, The Serendipity Bible, and The Invitation by Eugene Peterson)