

Discussion Notes

Beginnings: How do we thrive? Genesis 2.15-25

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How does our story start? The beginning of a story makes sense of the rest. Genesis 1-3 sheds light on our God-given nature and purpose. Here we begin again, rediscovering the origin of our humanity and hope. This nine-week series will ask questions like: Who made us? Who are we? Why are we here?

Work: placed in the garden to tend and watch over it.

- The garden had everything humanity needed, but we were placed there to do more than just enjoy it; we were given responsibility and assignment.
- The language of Genesis 2.15 suggests that the garden would not thrive as it was intended to if we did not cultivate and care for it.
- Work is not a punishment that came after the Fall, it was intended from the start.
- God worked and found satisfaction, therefore, we as his image are to work and find satisfaction.
- The value of work is not only the fruit of our labor; it is found in the labor it takes to make the fruit.
- Whether or not it is our paid career, we need to be actively engaged in work that benefits the world around us if we are to flourish.
- We are also called to participate in work in a balanced way.

Choice: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

- God provided all we need, but gave us the freedom to choose another option.
- The presence of this tree and this choice demonstrate that God is serious about the value of free will.
- We choose what we value and what we love enough to make the master of our lives.
- Without choice, love could not be genuine.
- Our capacity to survive is based in our ability to obey God—"if you eat of it you will surely die."
- God always gives counsel and warning to guide us in our decision making, historically and at present.
- If it does not feel like you are thriving, take stock of the choices you have been making and pray for guidance.

Relationship: it is not good for man to be alone

- "Helper" in Gen. 2.18 refers to one who brings strength in an area where it is lacking. Women have equal responsibility and authority.
- Woman comes from the side, not the head or the feet, to show she is made for a "partnership of love" (Peter Lombard).
- Gen. 2.24 shows God's plan for marriage and is picked up by Jesus in Matt. 19.4-6.

- Without loving relationships, marriage and/or community, we will not thrive the way we were intended to. We are better together!

Naked and unashamed

- Final picture is that of total satisfaction, purity, and abundance in God's good world.

Your will be done

- The key to our ability to thrive and contribute to thriving in God's world is seeking his will.

Discussion Questions

- When was a time you felt the greatest sense of satisfaction while working? Why do you think you were satisfied?
- What was a choice you made that had a significant impact on your life?
- What are your obstacles to thriving in healthy relationships?
- How can we practically move towards a balance in work, relationships, and rest? Can you remember a time you felt like you had that balance and what it felt like?