

Week 1: "Creation"

Memory Verse *God Disciplines His Sons*

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2

Day One Sunday, October 20, 2002 "The Creation"

Read: Genesis 1 (p. 4) and Commentary (p. 4)

Reflect: Creation has been called "a most elegant book." This "book" tells us a lot about God's character. Which parts of creation speak to you? What you do "hear" about God?

Dig: According to Romans 1:20 (p. 1279) what two characteristics of God are said to be clearly evident to all human beings?

What word in verse 18 is used to describe human beings' response to these truths? What evidence do you see of that response?

Look up Job 40:1 (p. 585) and read the "Freedom Point" on that page. Notice how God chooses to respond to Job's question about all the suffering in the world (chapters 38-41). How does this approach compare to the way we tend to handle questions about God's justice?

How does the truth that God is Creator set Job and us free?

Apply: As you look outside right now, in which ways does God communicate with you by what you see of his creation? How does the order and beauty make God clearly evident? Make a list and include this list in your daily prayers.

Day Two
Monday, October 21, 2002
"Divine Revelation"

Read: Read Psalm 19 (p. 603) Read Commentary (p. 603)

Reflect: Think for a few moments about the concept of "revelation." This is different than what we "discover" or "discern".

"What does the word revelation communicate to you about authority, intention, and our role?

In this Psalm it is clear that God wants to reveal himself as we look up and into: up to the sky and into his Word. What does God reveal about himself today when you look up and into?

Dig: Notice the place the concept of "rejoicing" and "joy" plays in this Psalm. What does this teach us about how joy comes into our life?

There are three sections to this Psalm. See if you can find them. How do they fit together? What ties them together in the mind of the poet?

What three kinds of sinning are mentioned in verses 12-13? Do you know of examples of each of these kinds of sins in your life?

Give more examples of "general" revelation and "special" revelation (see commentary).

Apply: What "glory" of God is God trying to reveal to you today in the skies? Look up again and again today and try to catch the "message" that God is communicating to you.

Use what you see in the skies and in creation to form a prayer of adoration to God.

Day Three
Tuesday, October 22, 2002
"The Nature of Humanity"

Read: Psalm 8 (p. 595) and commentary (p. 595)

Reflect: In what various ways are human beings defined by our culture? For example, for people who believe that human beings descended from apes, what does that say about who we are? What is your self-esteem currently based on?

According to this Psalm, what should it be based on?

Dig: According to this Psalm, what sets human beings apart from the rest of creation?

According to the commentary on page 595, what sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom?

What does the bible define as being "made in the image" of God? See Colossians 3:10-14 for part of the picture. Also check out Ephesians 4:22-24.

What do you think of the line from the commentary which goes like this: "What the heart takes in also becomes its master, stamping the heart with its character."? Compare this to II Cor. 3:17-18.

Apply: It is bondage to think of yourself as "just a _____." (you fill in the blank) It is also bondage to think too highly of yourself. God wishes us to have truth as the basis of our life. How does today's truth set you free?

How can you more fully become an image of God's true character today? How can you practically apply II Cor. 3:17-18?

Day Four
Wednesday, October 23, 2002
"The Significance of Humanity"

Read: Genesis 2 and commentary (p. 5)

Reflect: How does today's culture measure people's significance? How do you usually measure your significance? What does the theory of evolution say about the significance of human beings? How does the bible's story of beginnings tell us something different?

Dig: Look up the five other places (Malachi 2:15, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7-8, I Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 5:31). What do these passages have to say about the purpose of human sexuality and marriage? (Hint: children are not mentioned yet; God's relationship to the church is mentioned in one New Testament passage.)

What activities (list them) did Adam engage in before the fall into sin? What might that tell us about the new heaven and the new earth? How does this discovery of what Adam did in a perfect world help us to understand our purpose and significance?

Apply: The commentary tells us, *"Adam and Eve were safe and secure in the presence of God, both physically and psychologically. They were children of God who were intimately related to their heavenly Father."* How can this truth change the way you live this very day and fall asleep this very night? How does this truth set you free?

Day Five
Thursday, October 24, 2002
"The Way of Life"

Read: 2 Samuel 22 (p. 359) and Commentary (p. 359)

Reflect: What experience do you have in your life of machines that can function only one way? What are "owner's manuals" designed for? How is the bible like an "owner's manual"?

Dig: Take note of where this most famous of David's poems is placed (hint: scan chapter 23) and make notes as to the condition of David's heart at this time in his life.

Like the cross and resurrection form a "pattern" that defines our lives, the visit that God made to his people in Exodus 19: 16-25 (p. 85) was a story that was handed down through the generations and told by parents to their children. Read that story and see if you can show where it appears in David's story.

How can David say what he says in verses 21-25? What does a Psalm like Psalm 51 and the animal sacrifices have to do with what he says here? (hint: the animal sacrifices pointed to the cross of Jesus Christ).

Apply: God created the world and he knows best how to "run your life" as you live it in the world. Where do you have to give up and give in and allow God's "owner's manual (his Word) teach you how to live?

As the "Exodus event" (Exodus 19:16-25) shaped David's story, how does a similar event (the cross) shape your story?

Close with a simple prayer asking this Creator God to shape your life today so that you follow his way.