



We continued our series in Genesis looking at 2v4-25. Chapter 2 has a much more human focus than chapter 1. We learn here what it is to be human. In a sense this passage is a parallel to 1v1-2v3, but it is perhaps better to see it as an awful prologue to chapter 3: what resulted from God's creation of everything.

1 – Humans are ...created by God (v5-14)

We learn that we were formed in response to a need and for a purpose: the land needed cultivating (v5-6, 8). But we also learn that we were made from dust (v7). We're very much creatures not creators. We see God's provision of an abundant and ordered garden (v8-9) through which the world would be blessed (v10-14).

We, too, are created, not self-made people. Though we have much freedom in how we live, there are things about us that are determined, not least biological sex.

2 – Humans are ...commissioned by God (v15-17)

God gives his people a task and a command. The task is that they are to "work" and "take care" of the garden (v15). At one level this referred to gardening, but as Scripture progresses these become tabernacle and then temple terms. Though work has been marred by the Fall, humans were created to work and serve God!

God then speaks and gives a command. It has a positive (v16) and a negative part (v17). God has placed one tree in the garden from which they must not eat, and he lovingly and kindly warns them that their lives depend upon on their obeying him.

3 – Humans are ...completed by God (v18-25)

God's words in v18 are striking. After the "it was good" rhythm of chapter 1, God declares something to be *not* right: the man is alone (v18). What the man needs

seems to be help: he cannot fulfil God's commands on his own (1v26-28, v15). After the animals prove inadequate (v19-20), God creates a woman (v21). She is like the man (of the same substance – his 'bone and flesh' relative); different from him ('like-opposite' could crudely translate "suitable" (v18, 20)); and perfect for him (he sings for joy when he meets her (v23), and they come together in the perfect unity and oneness of marriage (v24)). One thing she is not is inferior to him. The Hebrew word for "helper" means provider of something needed. It is often used for God (eg. Exodus 18v4). The woman is of equal value, equally made in God's image, and equally essential for the fulfilling of God's commission.

The writer's jumping in at v24 to link what we see here to marriage in his day, as well as the many uses of this verse in the New Testament (eg. Matt 9, Mark 10, Eph 5) suggest that though marriage has been affected by the Fall, what we see here is still a template for today. The New Testament also suggests that we see here a pattern that within the church and biological family men are to take more of a leadership role. What we can be certain of is that, whether married or not, none of us is designed or able to do the Christian life on our own. We need each other!

Here are a few questions you might want to use with your group...

1. Every culture will find these early chapters of Genesis both wonderful and difficult. What are some of the ways that our culture/you personally find this chapter hard? Can you think of things other cultures might more struggle with?
2. How is it both humbling and dignifying to remember that God is our creator and that we are his creatures? What difference does it make to remember this?
3. Do you agree that we humans are made for service? What does that mean? How do we reconcile the command to work with the goodness of rest? What might godly work look like for you in this season?
4. The biblical view of marriage is under huge pressure in our society. Are there things in the Bible's teaching in these areas that you find hard? How can we persuade unbelievers that this is God's *good* plan for how we are to live?
5. What does it mean that we are not made to do the Christian life on our own? How can we get better at this, especially given that many of us are not married?
6. How do we read this chapter in light of the Fall? How do we read this chapter in light of the gospel? What is your one take away? What fills your heart with joy?