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Personal Bible Study

1: The Wilderness

1. In Genesis 1:2, three terms are used to describe the earth as God originally created it. What are they?

  without form, void (or empty), dark

2. How did God address each of these three problems in the rest of Genesis 1?

  He dealt with the darkness by speaking light into being (3:14-18). He dealt with the formlessness by bringing order to the creation, separating day and night, sky and land (4:10). He dealt with the void by filling the creation with plants, animals, and people (11:31).

3. Read Genesis 2. What are some things you see in this chapter that would lead you to believe that Adam and Eve had every reason to be perfectly content with God’s provision in Eden?

   Adam was made a living creature by God, who formed him and breathed life into him. He was placed in a garden paradise that God prepared for him, where God made everything grow. He was made rich with gold and precious stones. He enjoyed the beauty and provision of the rivers. He was given purpose in filling the earth and exercising dominion over it, and in working and keeping the garden. He was given a helper fit for him to accomplish this purpose, a wife who was a delight to him.

4. Read Genesis 3:1-5. In what way did the serpent sow seeds of discontent in Eve?

   The serpent questioned God’s character and God’s command. He made God sound unreasonably restrictive rather than generous. He contradicted what God had said about what would happen if they ate from the forbidden tree, suggesting that God had lied to them. He suggested that God had an evil, ulterior motive in restricting them from the tree, that he was trying to keep them from becoming like him.

5. According to Genesis 3:6, how did Eve entertain discontent with God’s provision in Eden, and what was the impact?

   Eve’s first mistake was to listen to the serpent and consider what he said. She then looked away from all that she had been given to focus her attention on the one thing that had been forbidden. When she studied the tree and determined that it would taste good, she became discontent with the fruit of all of the other trees. She saw the tree as delightful rather than dangerous, which made her discontent with all of the beautiful things in the garden. Believing that the tree would make her wise, she became discontent with the wisdom that had been granted to her and Adam in God’s clear command, as well as the greater wisdom that would have been theirs had they obeyed his command.
Discussion Guide

Chapter 1: The Story of the Wilderness

1. Most of us have a sense of emptiness or discontentment at one time or another. Have you found that to be true in your life? In what ways?

2. How did the Serpent sow seeds of discontentment in Eve? How did Eve begin to see a lack in her life?

   The serpent suggested that God was being restrictive and harsh and was withholding something from her that would add to her life. Eve listened to the serpent’s lies and considered them even as she studied and considered the fruit of the forbidden tree. She should have listened to God’s word and considered all of the goodness and gifts of God.

3. Perhaps you have never considered before that there was wilderness outside the garden of Eden that needed to be subdued, or that the task of Adam and Eve, along with their offspring, was to extend the boundaries of the garden until it was ordered and filled with image bearers bringing glory to God. Does all this make sense to you? Why or why not? (As you consider this question in light of the purposes of God revealed throughout the rest of Bible, you might look at Genesis 12:3; Psalm 8; Isaiah 45:18; Acts 1:8; and Revelation 5:9–10.)

   - **Genesis 12:3**: God’s plan is for the blessing that comes through his rule to extend to every people group on the earth.
   - **Psalm 8**: This psalm begins and ends with “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” In between, the psalmist speaks of God giving man dominion over the earth, over “all things.” God created man to extend his rule over the entire earth and all of the creatures in it.
   - **Isaiah 45:18**: God created the earth to be inhabited by his image bearers.
   - **Acts 1:8**: God’s intention for all of the earth to be filled with glad, obedient image bearers continues through Jesus’s declaration of the kingdom of God at his ascension. His kingdom will spread to the end of the earth.
   - **Revelation 5:9–10**: In the culmination of human history we see through John’s vision in Revelation that God’s intention to have his image bearers live and reign throughout the entire creation will be the reality throughout eternity.

4. Deuteronomy 8:3 says that God let his people hunger so that they would know that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. What does it mean to live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord in our day? And how can our discontentment direct us to live this way?