GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS · STUDY NOTES

Study 2: The man and the woman in the garden

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

📖 **Before you start: read Genesis 2:4–25.** Read it in your own Bible, all the way through, before the videos. Then in this study we go through it together, a few verses at a time. (About 4 minutes.)

PART 1

Formed from dust, given life

Genesis 2:4–17

Chapter 1 told us the whole week of creation, in order. Chapter 2 is not a second story that disagrees with the first. It comes back to the sixth day and looks at it closely, like opening a map of one town after a map of the whole country. It tells us what chapter 1 left out: how God made the man and the woman, where He put them, and what He gave them to do.

1. "This is the account of." These words open each new section of Genesis, and this is the first of them. What came from the heavens and the earth that God made? The story of mankind.

1 **Read Genesis 2:4–7**

What did the LORD God form the man from? What did He breathe into his nostrils?

2. "The LORD God." In chapter 1 we read of "God". Now we read of "the LORD God". "LORD" in capital letters stands for God's own personal name, the name He gave to Moses at the burning bush. It is the name of the God who makes promises to His people and keeps them. The Creator of everything is not far away and cold: He comes near, He speaks with the man, and He cares for him.

See also: Exodus 3:15.

3. Dust, and the breath of God. "Formed" is the word for what a potter does with clay. God shaped the man with care, from the dust of the ground. That is humbling: our bodies are made of the same stuff as the earth, and one day they will return to it. But God also "breathed the breath of life into his nostrils". Man received his life straight from God. He is a body made from

the earth and a soul given by God, joined in one person. So remember both: you are dust, and you depend on God for every breath; and you are the work of His hands, made to know Him.

See also: Isaiah 64:8.

2 **Read Psalm 103:13–14**

How does the LORD treat those who fear Him? What does He remember about us?

4. The first Adam and the last Adam. Paul quotes Genesis 2:7: "The first man Adam became a living being" (1 Corinthians 15:45). Then he sets Jesus Christ beside him: "the last Adam". The first Adam was given life. The last Adam gives life, and everyone who belongs to Him will one day be raised, body and soul.

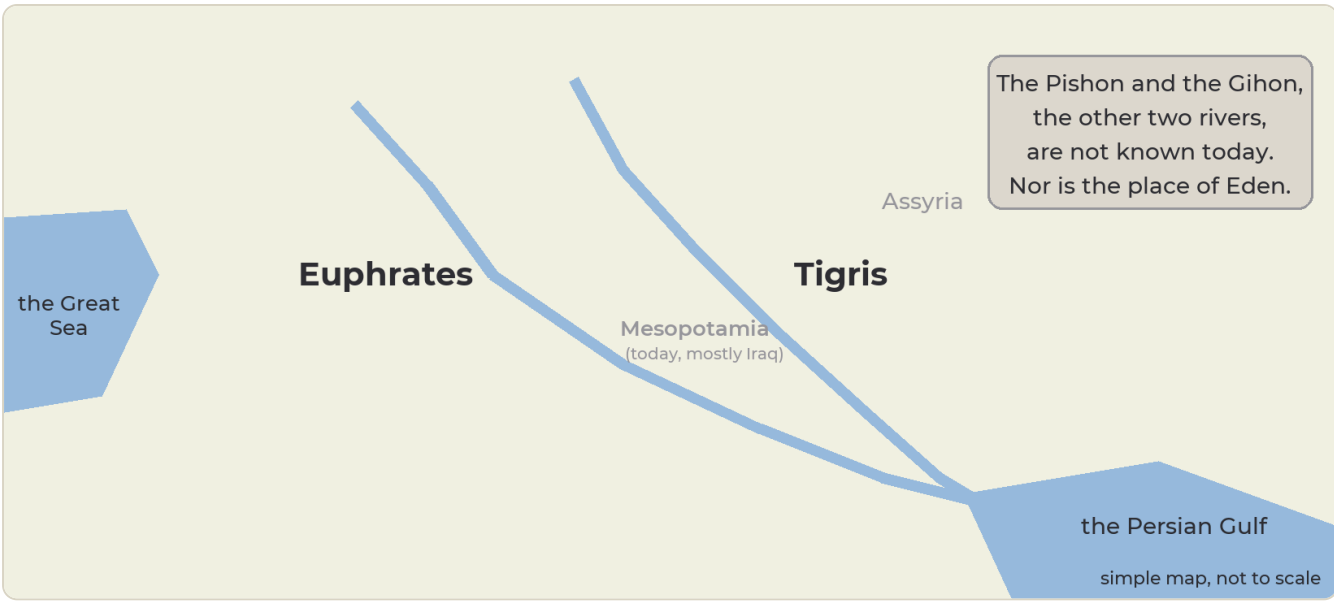
3 **Read 1 Corinthians 15:45**

What did the first Adam become? What is the last Adam?

5. A garden prepared. Before God put the man in the garden, He prepared everything he would need: food, water, and beauty too. The trees were "pleasing to the eye" as well as "good for food". Every good meal and every beautiful view is His gift.

4 **Read Genesis 2:8–14**

Which two trees were in the middle of the garden? What were the names of the four rivers?



The rivers of Eden (a simple map, not to scale). The Tigris and the Euphrates still flow through the land later called Mesopotamia; the Pishon and the Gihon are not known today.

Genesis names real rivers and real lands, with gold and precious stones. It does not begin "Once upon a time". It tells us about a real place, where real people lived. The Lord Jesus and the apostles spoke of Adam and Eve as real people.

6. Two trees. "The tree of life" was a sign that the man's life came from God and was kept by God. "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was forbidden. The man already knew what was good, because God told him. The question was who would decide what is good and what is evil. To eat from that tree would be to say to God, "I will decide for myself." That right belongs to God alone.

5 **Read Revelation 22:1–2**

What flows from the throne of God? What stands on either side of the river?

The garden was lost when man sinned. But on the last page of the Bible the river and the tree of life appear again. The Bible begins in a garden and ends in a city with a garden at its heart, where God lives with His people.

See also: Revelation 2:7.

7. Work before the fall. God placed the man in the garden "to cultivate and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Work is God's idea, not a punishment: it was given before there was any sin. Sin later made work hard, but the work itself is good. To cultivate is to work the ground and make it grow; to keep is to look after it and protect it. The earth is the LORD's, and we look after it for Him. And if

illness or age means that you can no longer do what you once did, your worth was never in your work: you are made in God's image, and He values you just the same.

6 **Read Colossians 3:23**

How should we work? For whom?

8. "You may eat freely." God's first word is not "No", but "Yes": "You may eat freely from every tree of the garden" (Genesis 2:16). Only one tree was kept back. It was a test of trust: would the man believe that the God who had given him everything was good, even without being told the reason? When God says "no" to something, we are tempted to think He is spoiling our happiness. But His commands are for our good.

7 **Read Genesis 2:15–17**

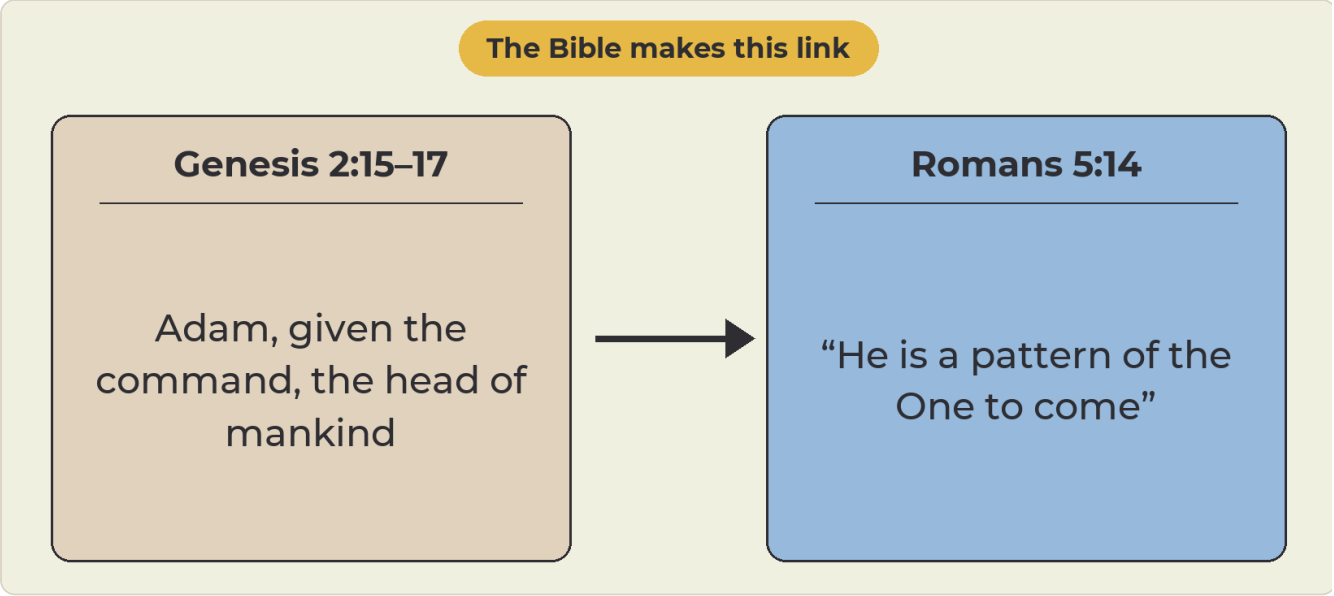
From which trees could the man eat? From which tree must he not eat, and why?

See also: 1 Timothy 6:17.

9. "You will surely die." This was the warning of a loving Father. On that day the body would begin to die and return to the dust. Deeper still, the man would be cut off from God, the source of his life; and, without a Saviour, that would be for ever. God gave the command to the man, and the man stood not only for himself, but for the whole human race that would come from him.

8 **Read Romans 5:12**

Through whom did sin enter the world? What came with sin?



A link the Bible itself makes: Adam, given the command, the head of mankind (Genesis 2:15–17), is "a pattern of the One to come" (Romans 5:14).

10. A pattern of the One to come. Paul calls Adam "a pattern of the One to come" (Romans 5:14), that is, of Christ. Not because Adam was like Christ in what he did, for Adam disobeyed, but because each of them stands at the head of a people. What Adam did counted for all who belong to him; what Christ did counts for all who belong to Him. Through Adam came death; through Christ comes life, for everyone who trusts in Him.

9 **Read 1 Corinthians 15:22**

What happens to all in Adam? What will happen to all in Christ?

PART 2

It is not good for the man to be alone

Genesis 2:18–25

1. "It is not good." All through chapter 1 we heard "it was good". Now, for the first time in the Bible, we hear "It is not good" (Genesis 2:18), and it is said before there was any sin. The man does not complain: God Himself says it. He made us for others, to love and to be loved, and to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

Before He made the woman, God brought the animals to the man to name. Each had its own kind, but there was no one like him: "for Adam no suitable helper was found" (Genesis 2:20).

God let him feel his need before He met it.

10 **Read Genesis 2:18–20**

What did God say was not good? What did the man do with the animals? What was not found?

2. "A suitable helper." "Helper" does not mean a lesser person. In the Old Testament the same word is used again and again of God Himself. God is not less than the people He helps, so to be a helper is not to be less: it is a calling, not a lower rank. "Suitable" means one who corresponds to him: like him, sharing his nature and made in God's image too, and yet different, a woman, made for the man.

11 **Read Psalm 121:1–2**

Where does the psalmist's help come from?

So the man and the woman are equal in worth before God, but God gave them different callings. The man was made first; he received God's command and the work of the garden, to lead, to provide and to protect. The woman was made to help him in all of it. This order was given before there was any sin, for our good, and the New Testament builds on it when it teaches about marriage and the church.

3. Made from his side. God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep: the man did nothing to make his wife. It was God's work, and she was God's gift, and God "brought her to him" (Genesis 2:22). He made her from the man's own body, so that she shares his very nature. Christians have long said that the woman was not taken from the man's head, to rule over him, nor from his feet, to be trodden down by him, but from his side, to be his equal; from under his arm, to be protected; and from near his heart, to be loved.

12 **Read Genesis 2:21–23**

What did God take from the man? What did He make from it? What did the man say?

4. The first song. The man's first words in the Bible are a song of joy over his wife: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23). In Hebrew, as in English, "man" and "woman" sound alike: they belong together. And the man gives her the name, because God had given him the care of all that was in the garden, and of her too. That care is meant to be loving, gentle and humble.

5. "One flesh." "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Leave: a new home begins; he still honours his parents, but his wife now comes first. Be united: hold fast; marriage is a promise for life. One flesh: two lives become one, and the joining of their bodies belongs within marriage, and nowhere else. Marriage was not invented by people: God made it in the beginning, one man and one woman, joined by God for life.

13 **Read Genesis 2:24–25**

What three things does a man do when he marries? How were the man and his wife at the end of the chapter?

6. What God has joined together. When the Lord Jesus was asked about marriage, He went back to these very words, and said that "the Creator" spoke them. He joined the two chapters: "male and female" from chapter 1, and "one flesh" from chapter 2. And He added His own command: "what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6).

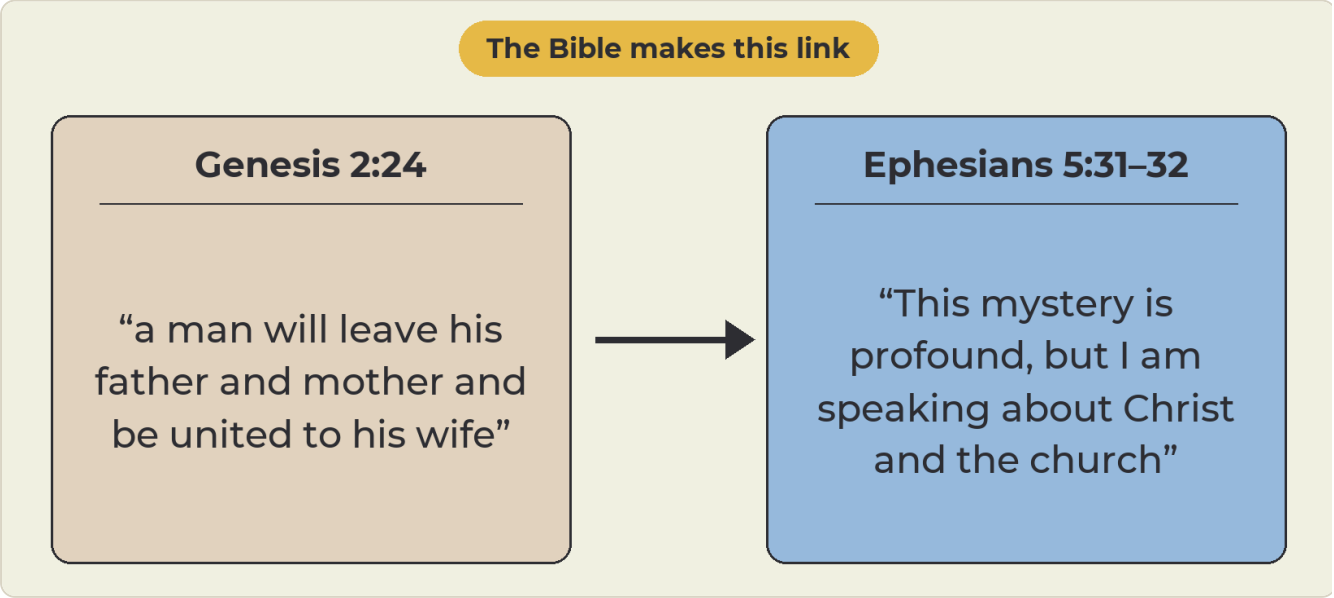
14 **Read Matthew 19:4–6**

Who made them male and female? What must man not do?

If you are not married

Genesis 2 is not saying that your life is less. Paul was not married, and he calls it a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7:7). The Lord Jesus was not married, and no one ever lived a fuller life. Your worth is not in whether you are married, or widowed, or without the children you long for. It is in the God who made you in His image. And there is a greater union than any marriage, open to everyone.

7. "Naked, and they were not ashamed." They had nothing to hide, from each other or from God. There was no guilt, and so there was no shame. All of us know what shame is; in study 3 we will see where it came from.



A link the Bible itself makes: "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife" (Genesis 2:24); "This mystery is profound, but I am speaking about Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32).

8. Christ and the church. Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 and says: "I am speaking about Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32). The first marriage was a picture of a greater one: Christ is the Bridegroom, and His people are His bride. Just before this, Paul tells husbands to love their wives "just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Headship in a Christian home is not a man pleasing himself, but a man giving himself, as Christ gave Himself.

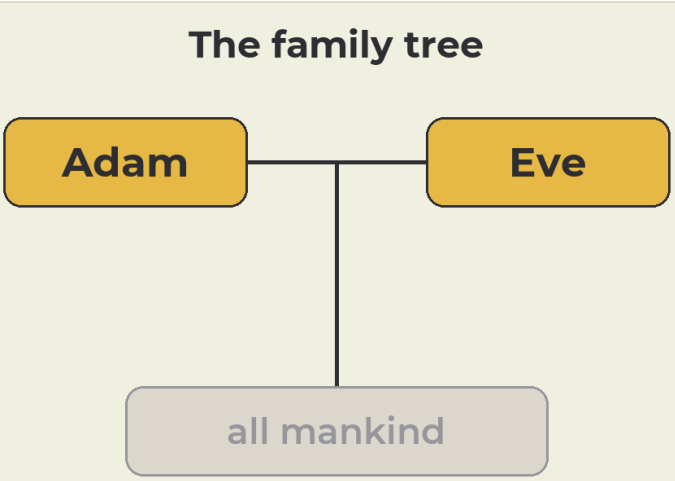
15 **Read Ephesians 5:31–32**

Which verse of Genesis does Paul quote? About whom does he say he is speaking?

9. The marriage of the Lamb. The Bible begins with a wedding in the garden, and it ends with "the marriage of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7). In the garden the man and the woman were naked and not ashamed; since then we have all known shame. But the bride of Christ is given "fine linen, bright and pure" (Revelation 19:8). This is the greater union: it is for everyone who comes to Christ in repentance and faith, married or single, young or old.

16 **Read Revelation 19:7–8**

Whose marriage has come? What was the bride given to wear?



The family tree begins: Adam and Eve, from whom all mankind has come. The tree will grow through the course.

Study 2 in summary

The LORD God formed the man from the dust and breathed life into him. He placed him in a garden full of beauty and food, gave him work to do and one command to keep. He saw that it was not good for the man to be alone, and He made the woman from his side, equal in worth, and made for him. And He brought them together in marriage: one man and one woman, one flesh, with nothing to hide. All through the chapter the Bible points us to Christ: the last Adam, who obeyed where the first Adam would fail, and the Bridegroom, who gave Himself for His bride.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. You are dust, and you are the work of God's hands. Which of these do you most need to remember today?

2. How could you do your work this week "as for the Lord"?

3. When God says "no" to something, do you trust that He is still good?

4. Are you in Christ, the last Adam, who gives life to all who trust in Him?

5. Why do you think God let the man feel his need before He made the woman?

6. The word "helper" is used of God Himself. How does that change the way you think about helping others?

7. **What does the Lord Jesus teach about marriage in Matthew 19, and why does He go back to Genesis?**

8. **Do you belong to Christ, the Bridegroom who gave Himself for His bride?**

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 2

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

GENESIS · STUDY 2 · MEMORY VERSE

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”

1 Corinthians 15:22

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Genesis 2:4–7** *4This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made them. 5Now no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth, nor had any plant of the field sprouted, for the LORD God had not yet sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. 6But springs welled up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. 7Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.*

2 **Psalm 103:13–14** *13As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. 14For He knows our frame; He is mindful that we are dust.*

3 **1 Corinthians 15:45** *So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam a life-giving spirit.*

4 **Genesis 2:8–14** *8And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, where He placed the man He had formed. 9Out of the ground the LORD God gave growth to every tree that is pleasing to the eye and good for food. And in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it branched into four headwaters: 11The name of the first river is the Pishon; it winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12And the gold of that land is pure, and bdellium and onyx are found there. 13The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the whole land of Cush. 14The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

5 **Revelation 22:1–2** *1Then the angel showed me a river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2down the middle of the main street of the city. On either side of the river stood a tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit and yielding a fresh crop for each month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

6 **Colossians 3:23** *Whatever you do, work at it with your whole being, as for the Lord and not for men,*

7 **Genesis 2:15–17** *15Then the LORD God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded him, "You may eat freely from every tree of the garden, 17but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die."*

8 **Romans 5:12** *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death was passed on to all men, because all sinned.*

9 **1 Corinthians 15:22** *For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

10 **Genesis 2:18–20** *18The LORD God also said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make for him a suitable helper." 19And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and He brought them to the man to see what he would name each one. And whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.*

11 **Psalm 121:1–2** *1A song of ascents. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

12 **Genesis 2:21–23** *21So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he slept, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the area with flesh. 22And from the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man, He made a woman and brought her to him. 23And the man said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for out of man she was taken."*

13 **Genesis 2:24–25** *24For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. 25And the man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed.*

14 **Matthew 19:4–6** *4Jesus answered, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

15 **Ephesians 5:31–32** *31"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32This mystery is profound, but I am speaking about Christ and the church.*

16 **Revelation 19:7–8** *7Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him the glory. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. 8She was given clothing of fine linen, bright and pure." For the fine linen she wears is the righteous acts of the saints.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 2: The man and the woman in the garden

> **Memory verse:** “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See from Genesis 2:4–17 how the LORD God formed the man from the dust and gave him life, placed him in a garden He had prepared, gave him work to do, and gave him one command, with a loving warning.
- See that Adam stood at the head of the human race, and that he is "a pattern of the One to come": Christ, the last Adam.
- See from Genesis 2:18–25 how God made the woman and brought her to the man, what marriage is as God made it, and how it points to Christ and His church.

Suggested timing (about 80 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer. Ask the group to read Genesis 2:4–25 before the meeting.
- **35 min** Part 1 video (14 min); Genesis 2:4–17, with Psalm 103, 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 22, Colossians 3 and Romans 5.
- **35 min** Part 2 video (13 min); Genesis 2:18–25, with Psalm 121, Matthew 19, Ephesians 5 and Revelation 19.
- **5 min** Reflection questions. Close in prayer, thanking God for His good gifts: life, work, and marriage, and above all Christ.

For most groups, take one part each week. If you do, read the passage for that part aloud together before the video.

Tips

- Keep the main point in view: Genesis 2 shows the goodness of God, who gives life, a home, work and a companion, and it points to Christ, the last Adam and the Bridegroom.
- If someone asks whether chapters 1 and 2 disagree, use the picture in the study: chapter 1 is the map of the whole country, chapter 2 the map of one town. Chapter 2 looks closely at the sixth day.
- The study teaches that the man and the woman are equal in worth and different in calling, and that this order was given before the fall. Say it as the study does, plainly and gently, and keep it tied to Ephesians 5:25: headship means a man giving himself, as Christ gave Himself.
- Part 2 has a word for those who are not married, or widowed, or longing for children. Some in your group may feel this keenly. Give them the study's comfort: their worth is in the God who made them, and the greater union with Christ is open to all.
- Some may ask about the rivers or where Eden was. Answer briefly: two of the rivers are still known; the other two are not, and no one can now point to the place. Then return to the point: Genesis is telling us about real people in a real place.
- The pictures in these notes (the rivers, the two links the Bible makes, and the family tree) are the ones in the videos. They are useful for a short recap at the start of the next meeting.