

GENESIS

UNCHANGING TRUTH

God allows restarts.

That's what the book of Genesis shows us again and again. When God created the human race, he gave us everything we could possibly want, including the opportunity to choose for ourselves whether to obey or disobey him. We looked around at paradise, saw how perfect everything would be if we would just follow God's plan ... and then took off on a sin spree that ruined everything. Creation hasn't been the same since. And once we got a taste of sin, we were hooked. Lying, cheating, sex with strangers, incest, kidnapping, rape, murder, human sacrifice — nothing was too disgusting or too evil for us. When we fell, we fell hard. Thankfully, God doesn't love us because we are good — he loves us because he is good.

No matter how far we fell, no matter how sick and twisted things got, no matter how badly we messed things up, God never stopped loving us. He never gave us what we deserved. Why? Because God had a plan to make things right again, a way for us to enjoy the kind of relationship with him that he had in mind all along.

If you think you've ruined your relationship with God, think again. You can do something about it. Admit what you've done and ask God to forgive you. Remember, God allows "restarts." *He isn't just the God of creation — he's also the God of re-creation.*

THE BASICS **AUTHOR** Moses / **AUDIENCE** People of Israel / **DATE** Between 1446 and 1406 BC. Moses may have completed Genesis before his death on Mount Nebo. The Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, awaiting their entrance into the promised land. / **LOCATION** The events take place in Mesopotamia, in the region known today as the Middle East. / **VERSE TO REMEMBER** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1).

FOUNDATIONS

- 1 We are all created in his image. Women, men, black, white, brown, tall, short. All of us (1:27).
- 2 God is the reason the world is a remarkably beautiful place. Every time we notice the amazing wonders of creation, we should praise God for his creative work (1:31).
- 3 God does not take our sin lightly. Neither should we (6:5–7).
- 4 Everyone will be blessed through Abraham and his descendants (12:1–3).

2 | GENESIS 1:1

THE BEGINNING

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” ⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

⁹ And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

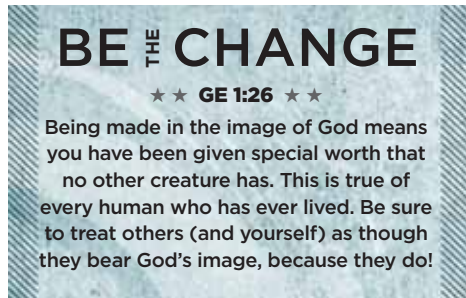
²⁰ And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^a and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”



^a 26 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth*

²⁹Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

ADAM AND EVE

⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth^a and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,⁶ but streams^b came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God formed a man^c from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

⁸Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^d and onyx are also there.) ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care

GOD CALLING

TO: MY SON

Heavenly Father: Don't give in to your feelings of worthlessness. You weren't made on some assembly line. You're not the product of random chance. I designed you individually and created you in my image. That makes you valued and worthy of respect.

★ ★ GE 1:27 ★ ★

BE THE CHANGE

★ ★ GE 2:3 ★ ★

God set the pattern for the world—six parts work to one part rest. When you work, make sure you give it everything you've got. But don't forget to give yourself time to rest—to recharge your batteries and reconnect with God.

BE THE CHANGE

★ ★ GE 2:15 ★ ★

God put the humans he had made in the Garden to care for it. In our world, we are responsible for caring for the earth where we live and around the world. Do your part to respect the world that God has entrusted to you.

^a 5 Or land; also in verse 6 ^b 6 Or mist ^c 7 The Hebrew for man (adam) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (adamah); it is also the name Adam (see verse 20). ^d 12 Or good; pearls ^e 13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia

4 | GENESIS 2:16

of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

¹⁸The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam^a no suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs^b and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^c he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

THE FALL

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring^d and hers;
he will crush^e your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

BE THE CHANGE

★ ★ GE 3:15 ★ ★

The offspring of the woman in this verse refers to Jesus. That means no matter how powerful Satan may seem now, ultimately he will lose because Jesus is going to crush him once and for all. You can bet your life on it.

^a 20 Or the man

^b 21 Or took part of the man’s side

^c 22 Or part

^d 15 Or seed

^e 15 Or strike

PSALMS

UNCHANGING TRUTH

God's definition of a real man is very different from ours.

Here is what you might hear makes someone a man: Real men keep their feelings to themselves. Real men never show weakness. Real men ignore the pain and keep moving. Real men never let anyone know what's going on inside. Real men don't care about others.

Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong.

Men were not created to be emotionless robots. God wired us with real emotions, and he gave us the ability and the need to express our deepest, most intimate feelings both with other humans and with our Creator. We all need God.

Take David as an example. No one would accuse this guy of being weak. He was a man who killed a bear and a lion—not to mention a giant named Goliath. Yet when you look at the things he wrote in the book of Psalms, it becomes pretty clear that David wasn't afraid to express his emotions.

You shouldn't be afraid to express your feelings either. Maybe you're not the writer type who can craft poems about life and God, but that's okay; you can still express your deepest feelings to him in prayer. Regardless of what anyone tells you, emotions aren't something to keep inside. God created you with the need and ability to express yourself to God and others. *Besides, sharing your emotions with God is a great way to get close to him.*

THE BASICS **AUTHORS** David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, Heman, Ethan and Moses / **AUDIENCE** People of Israel (different psalms were written for specific audiences) / **DATE** The Psalms were written between the time of Moses (1440 BC) and the Babylonian captivity (586 BC). / **LOCATION** Many psalms were read or sung in Israelite worship in God's temple. / **VERSE TO REMEMBER** "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD" (150:6).

FOUNDATIONS

- 1 Pride and arrogance will always get in the way of a healthy relationship with God (10:2–6).
- 2 No matter how dark or frightening things get, God is always with us (23:4).
- 3 Worship is job #1 for all believers (100:1–5).
- 4 Keeping God's Word fresh in our mind is a good way to avoid the temptation to turn from his will (119:11).

BOOK I

PSALMS 1–41

PSALM 1

¹ Blessed is the one
 who does not walk in step with the wicked
 or stand in the way that sinners take
 or sit in the company of mockers,

² but whose delight is in the law of the
 LORD,

and who meditates on his law day and
 night.

³ That person is like a tree planted by
 streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season
 and whose leaf does not wither—
 whatever they do prospers.

⁴ Not so the wicked!
 They are like chaff
 that the wind blows away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

PSALM 2

¹ Why do the nations conspire^a
 and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth rise up
 and the rulers band together
 against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,

³ “Let us break their chains
 and throw off their shackles.”

⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
 the Lord scoffs at them.

⁵ He rebukes them in his anger
 and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

⁶ “I have installed my king
 on Zion, my holy mountain.”

⁷ I will proclaim the LORD’s decree:

He said to me, “You are my son;
 today I have become your father.

⁸ Ask me,
 and I will make the nations your inheritance,
 the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You will break them with a rod of iron^b;
 you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

BE THE CHANGE

★ ★ PS 1:1 ★ ★

Don't follow the actions or priorities
 of people who don't know God. The
 man who delights to follow God's
 commands is the one who is blessed.

LIVE THE
REVOLUTION

★ ★ PS 1:1–3 ★ ★

CHOOSING YOUR
FRIENDS WISELY

Being “in” this world but not
 “of” it means that your influence
 on unbelievers should be greater
 than their influence on you. Did
 you choose the friends you have
 now, or did they choose you?
 Or did you happen to drift to-
 gether without much thought?
 What led you to start hanging
 out with them? Would God be
 excited about your choice of
 friends? If you have friends who
 make it hard for you to live the
 way God wants, be willing to
 make a difficult sacrifice and
 find new friends.

^a 1 Hebrew; Septuagint *rage*

^b 9 Or *will rule them with an iron scepter* (see Septuagint and Syriac)

- ¹⁰Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
- ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
- ¹²Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

PSALM 3^a

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

- ¹LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
- ²Many are saying of me,
“God will not deliver him.”^b
- ³But you, LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
- ⁴I call out to the LORD,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.
- ⁵I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
- ⁶I will not fear though tens of thousands
assail me on every side.
- ⁷Arise, LORD!
Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.
- ⁸From the LORD comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.

PSALM 4^c

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

- ¹Answer me when I call to you,
my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- ²How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods^{d?}^e
- ³Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant
for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- ⁴Tremble and^f do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.
- ⁵Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the LORD.

^a In Hebrew texts 3:1-8 is numbered 3:2-9. ^b 2 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 4 and 8. ^c In Hebrew texts 4:1-8 is numbered 4:2-9. ^d 2 Or *seek lies* ^e 2 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 4. ^f 4 Or *In your anger* (see Septuagint)