

Old Testament

Genesis

Author:

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Date:

About 1440 BC

Everyday Life Principles:

Beginnings are important and, thankfully, God continually gives us opportunities for a fresh start.

Be watching for the opportunities God brings your way. They will present themselves in the situations of your everyday life, such as your relationships, your workplace, the way you choose to spend your time, and issues of personal integrity.

Only as you take advantage of these opportunities can you move forward in God's plans for your life.

We often hear the book of Genesis described as a “book of beginnings,” but I also like to think of it as a book of opportunities. From its start to its finish, we read stories of people who were presented with opportunities.

First, we see Eve with the opportunity to choose between good and evil—between God’s instruction and the serpent’s deception. We read about Noah and his opportunity to demonstrate his faith when everyone around him thought he was crazy. We see Abraham with an opportunity to believe God’s promise when it was naturally impossible and then to obey God when obedience required a willingness to sacrifice the promised son for whom he waited so long. We learn about Jacob’s opportunity to deceive, which resulted in all kinds of trouble—and later with an opportunity to surrender completely to God, which resulted in great blessing. We see Joseph with opportunities to forgive and to trust God.

Throughout Genesis, people were blessed when they took advantage of opportunities to choose well—to choose truth over deception, faith over fear, peace over strife, forgiveness over bitterness, patience and waiting on God over trying to force something to happen. I hope the stories and principles in this book will help you recognize the opportunities God gives you and help you make wise choices that will lead to greater blessings than you have ever known.

1 IN THE beginning God (*Elohim*) created [by forming from nothing] the heavens and the earth. [Heb 11:3]

²The earth was formless and void *or* a waste and emptiness, and darkness was upon the face of the deep [primeval ocean that covered the unformed earth]. The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

⁴God saw that the light was good (pleasing, useful) *and* He affirmed and sustained it; and God separated the light [distinguishing it] from the darkness. [2 Cor 4:6]

⁵And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse [of the sky] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters [below the expanse] from the waters [above the expanse]."

⁷And God made the expanse [of sky] and separated the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so [just as He commanded].

⁸God called the expanse [of sky] heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

⁹Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place [of standing, pooling together], and let the dry land appear"; and it was so.

¹⁰God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called

seas; and God saw that this was good (pleasing, useful) *and* He affirmed and sustained it.

¹¹So God said, "Let the earth sprout [tender] vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit according to (limited to, consistent with) their kind, whose seed is in them upon the earth"; and it was so.

¹²The earth sprouted *and* abundantly produced vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, according to their kind; and God saw that it was good *and* He affirmed and sustained it.

¹³And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be light-bearers (sun, moon, stars) in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be *useful* for signs (tokens) [of God's provident care], and for *marking* seasons, days, and years; [Gen 8:22]

¹⁵and let them be *useful* as lights in the expanse of the heavens to provide light on the earth"; and it was so, [just as He commanded].

¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light (the sun) to rule the day, and the lesser light (the moon) to rule the night; *He made* the [galaxies of] stars also [that is, all the amazing wonders in the heavens].

¹⁷God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to provide light upon the earth,

¹⁸to rule over the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good *and* He affirmed and sustained it.

Speak the Word

Lord, I thank You that You have blessed me and called me to be fruitful in my life. I pray that I will use the resources You have created to serve You and to serve others.

—ADAPTED FROM GENESIS 1:28

¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, "Let the waters swarm *and* abundantly produce living creatures, and let birds soar above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens."

²¹God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind; and God saw that it was good *and* He affirmed and sustained it.

²²And God blessed them, saying, "Be

fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

²³And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to (limited to, consistent with) their kind: livestock, crawling things, and wild animals of the earth according to their kinds"; and it was so [because He had spoken them into creation].

²⁵So God made the wild animals of the earth according to their kind, and the cattle according to their kind, and

enjoy your life

When God had completed His six days of creation, He took time to look over everything and He saw that "it was very good and He validated it completely" (Genesis 1:31). God took time to enjoy the work of His hands, and we should do the same. In our passion to possess more and more, we often fall into the trap of working, working, working—and we never enjoy the fruit of our labor. Sometimes we should simply take time to relax and enjoy what we have accomplished.

The writer of Ecclesiastes said there is nothing better for a person than to see "good in his labor" (Ecclesiastes 2:24). I have always been a hard worker. A few years ago, I realized I was working hard but not taking time to enjoy what I was doing. I made a decision to include enjoyment in my life. I no longer just "do" conferences; I enjoy them. When my house is clean and pretty, I take time to look at it and enjoy it. At the end of a year I go over my calendar and remember the various things I have done, and I enjoy the sense of accomplishment it brings. I look at what God has enabled me to do, and I say, "It is good."

Many people feel worthless, insecure, and unacceptable, but God looked at *everything* He had created, including man, and said, "It is very good." He validated it completely. God knows everything about each of us, and He loves us unconditionally. God approves of us; He may not approve of everything we do, but He does approve of us as His beloved children. I encourage you to make a decision to not only enjoy the labor of your hands, but to approve of and enjoy yourself as well.

Choosing to enjoy and accept myself is one of the best decisions I have ever made. God does not create anything worthless. He is good, and everything He does is good. We cannot believe that God created us and also believe we are worthless. Begin to accept and enjoy yourself where you are, and God will help you get to where you need to be.