

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“The Perfect Life”

Genesis 2:4-25

2002

Introduction

Have you wondered what it would be like to live the Perfect Life? Imagine – having a perfect body, being married to the perfect spouse, raising perfect children, working at a perfect job, living in the perfect house in the perfect neighborhood in a perfect world! Wouldn't it be wonderful! We sometimes fantasize about a life like that, but we know it's impossible in this fallen world. But there was a time when living the perfect life was far more than just a dream – it was a reality. For Adam and Eve, life in the Garden of Eden was perfect! It was the life God originally intended for mankind to experience. It was heaven on earth!

In Genesis chapter 2 we find an expanded, more detailed narrative of the creation of man that was briefly described for us in chapter 1. And it is a description of the perfect life!

I The Perfect Man

A. God formed man from the dust of the ground [Verse 4-7a]

Dust of the ground = Adamah = Leading to the naming of **Adam**. It means “soil”

When God created man, He did not make him out of gold or silver or precious stones. Instead, He made him out of life's most basic element, the dust of the ground. What made man unique was the way God organized that dust.

Psalms 103:14 “... the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.”

Since we're made of dirt and Paul in the NT calls our earthly bodies tents, the only reasonable conclusion we can come to is that we really are nothing but dirt bags!

Man's value illustrated:

In a recent study conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils it was discovered that the total monetary value of the elements in the human body adds up to a whopping \$4.50!

The chemical and mineral composition of the human body breaks down as follows:

78% gas – (Oxygen – 65%, Hydrogen – 10%, and Nitrogen - 3%)

Which explains a lot if you have young boys living in your house.

12% miscellaneous chemicals and metals.

Funny story:

After church, Johnny tells his parents he has to go and talk to the minister right away. They agree, and the pastor greets the family.

"Pastor," Johnny says, "I heard you say today that our bodies came from the dust."
 "That's right, Johnny, I did," he says.
 "And I heard you say that when we die, our bodies go back to dust."
 "Yes, I'm glad you were listening," the pastor replies. "Why do you ask?"
 "Well you better come over to our house right away and look under my bed 'cause there's someone either comin' or goin'!"

1. Man was made in the image of God - Gen 1:27

Although sin has corrupted our image-bearing nature and distorted our intended reflection of God's true character and nature, it is God's intention for every believer to once again bear that image in its fullest expression.

Rom 8:29 "... God ... predestined [us] to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."

1 John 3:2 "... when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

B. God breathed into man the breath of life [Verse 7b]

Breath of life = Ruach = "Breath or Spirit" (same in both Hebrew and in Greek)

This is far more than supernatural CPR. It is the impartation of God's Spirit into man.

James 2:26 tells us, "the body without the spirit is dead."

1. Man became a living being [Verse 7c]

Living being = Nephesh = "Soul"

II The Perfect Environment

Some say, "Environment is everything!" Modern sociologists and psychologists believe that if you can just put a person in the right environment, with the right parents, the right education, and the right socio-economic opportunities, then you will end up with a moral, ethical, well-balanced loving person. No doubt all of these things help, but the book of Genesis stands as a testament that environment isn't everything.

A. God planted a garden in Eden [Verse 8]

Eden = "Delight or pleasure"

Many scholars believe that Eden was located somewhere near southern Iraq.

If this is true, then why is the area so desolate now? God's judgment! - Deut 28.

Muslim countries are notorious for famine, drought, and oppressive regimes.

1. It became man's dwelling place

It was a place God had made to be a perfect habitation for Adam and Eve.

2. It had all kinds of trees that were: [Verse 9a]

a. Pleasing to the eye

Illustration: The beauty of the Wailua Arboretum

- b. Good for food
 - James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above ...”
- B. God provided two special trees in the middle of the garden [Verse 9b]
 - 1. The tree of life - Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14
 - The **tree of life** was for the granting of eternal life (Genesis 3:22). God still has a tree of life available to the believer (Revelation 2:7), which is in heaven (Revelation 22:2).
 - 2. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - It is not the knowledge of good and evil itself that was the problem, since according to Gen 3:22, God Himself has this knowledge. We are also encouraged in Heb 5:14 “to train ourselves to distinguish good from evil through the consistent study of God’s Word.”
 - If man had obeyed, he would have come to this knowledge in a legitimate way – by the revelation of God. But, by disregarding the clear command of God to not eat of this tree, he attained to the knowledge of good and evil in an unlawful and fatal way. Bottom line: Adam and Eve fell into the most common of Stan’s deceptions – “you can be like God.”
 - Gen 3:5 “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- C. God provided a river to water the Garden [Verse 10-14]
 - 1. It flowed from Eden
 - Revelation 22:1-2 “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.”
 - 2. It separated into four headwaters:
 - a. The Pishon that winds through Havilah
 - b. The Gihon that winds through Cush
 - c. The Tigris that winds through Asshur
 - d. The Euphrates that winds through Iraq

There is a great deal of speculation about the current location of these 4 rivers. However, the flood dramatically changed the course and original location of these rivers. Only the Tigris and Euphrates still exist today.

III The Perfect Job

- A. God appointed man to: [Verse 15]
 - 1. Work in the Garden of Eden
 - Work was good for Adam and was part of Adam’s perfect existence before the fall.
 - “Work keeps at bay three great evils: boredom, vice and need.” Voltaire

But from a spiritual perspective, work does far more than simply keep us out of trouble – it allows us to participate in God’s divine nature.

God is a worker! He worked to create the heavens and the earth and according to John 5:17, the Father is still working and so is Jesus Christ.

The amazing thing about this is that God invites us to participate in His work. And when we do, we are participating in His divine nature. Unfortunately, many people take no pride in their work. They work just hard enough not to get fired, and get paid just enough not to quit.

Application:

“Bob, that’s easy for you to say. You’re a pastor!”

It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it and for whom he does it.

Col 3:23-24 “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

2. Take care of the Garden of Eden

Man is charged to be a faithful steward of God’s creation.

Application: The parable of the talents – Matt 25:14-23

Matt 25:23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”

Our future responsibilities in the kingdom of God will be determined by the degree of our faithful service to the Lord in this life.

B. God commanded man to: **[Verse 16-17]**

1. Eat of any tree in Garden (including the Tree of Life)

2. Not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

It is interesting that after this account in Genesis 2, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil disappears from Scripture. It’s never mentioned again.

Why did God make the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Because for Adam to be a creature of free will, there had to be a *choice*, some opportunity to rebel against God. If there is never a command, never something forbidden, then there can never be choice; and God wants our love and obedience to Him to be the love and obedience of *choice*.

Application: Three benefits of temptation

1. It increases our spiritual strength

1 John 2:14 “I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”

2. It produces spiritual maturity

James 1:2-4 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

3. It presents an opportunity to express my love, devotion and loyalty to God

God not only makes His command clear to Adam, but He also clearly spells out the consequences for disobedience:

a. When you eat of it you will die - Gen. 5:3-5

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death ...”

C. God gave man responsibility in His creative work [Verse 19-20a]

1. He brought the animals to Adam for him to name

This was man’s first act of dominion over the creatures around him.

It probably involved a careful study on Adam’s part to note the unique characteristics of each creature. In doing so, Adam would have observed that each creature had a mate -- a wonderfully designed counterpart. But for Adam there was no counterpart.

IV The Perfect Woman

A. God recognized man’s need for a helper [Verse 18, 20b]

1. It was not good for man to be alone

For the first time, God sees something that is **not good**: the aloneness of man.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

2. There was no suitable helper for man

Helper = 'ezer = “Companion or partner, a helper correspondent to himself”

This Old Testament word never implies any sense of inferiority whatsoever.

Psalms 115:9-11 “O house of Israel, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield. You who fear him, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield.”

And so God created woman to be a perfectly suitable helper to the man. God gives to man the responsibility (and the accountability) to be the leader in the home and gives to the woman the responsibility and accountability to help him. The

purpose of all of this is “that with one heart and mouth [they] may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom 15:5-6

Application:

Share about my partnership with Becky.

B. God created woman [Verse 21]

1. He caused man to fall into a deep sleep

Here in Genesis we have the record of the very first operation with anesthesia.

2. He took one of Adam’s ribs and made woman

Why did God use Adam’s rib to create Eve?

Funny story:

Adam was walking around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely, so God asked him, "What is wrong, Adam?"

Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to.

God said that he was going to make Adam a companion and that it would be a woman.

He said, "This person will gather food for you, cook for you, and when you discover clothing she'll wash it for you. She will always agree with every decision you make. She will bear your children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She won't nag you and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will never have a headache and will freely give you love and passion whenever you need it."

Adam asked God, "What will a woman like this cost?"

God replied, "An arm and a leg."

Then Adam asked, "What can I get for a rib?"

The rest is history

Jewish Tradition:

There is a beautiful Jewish tradition saying “God made woman, not out of man’s foot to be under him, nor out of his head to be over him”, but “She was taken from under his arm that he might protect her and from next to his heart that he might love her.”

3. He presented her to Adam [Verse 22-23]

a. Adam declared her to be:

1. “Bone of my bone” - Gen. 29:14

2. “Flesh of my flesh”

a. In many ways, a woman’s needs are similar to a man’s:

So “husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies ...” Eph 5:28

b. But in other ways, a woman’s needs are far different from man’s:

1 Peter 3:7 “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.”

b. Adam named her, “Woman”

Woman = Ishshah = “Feminine of 'iysh (eesh) which means, “man.”

4. He established the covenant of marriage [Verse 24]

This passage forms the foundation for the institution of marriage – one man and one woman married for life! This was God’s idea. It is His divine plan for:

- Dealing with loneliness
- Populating the earth
- Allowing mankind to participate in God’s divine nature.

a. Man is to leave his father and mother

Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife ...’”

Man is to leave his parents, not in the sense of avoiding his responsibility to them (Mk 7:10-13; Eph 6:2-3), but in the sense of no longer being dependent on them or being under their headship. The husband is to begin to function as the head of a new home and his wife is to submit herself to his leadership.

Application: It is very important to leave home!

b. Man is to be united to his wife

United = Dabaq = “To adhere firmly, as if with glue.”

Illustration: Wallpaper stripping story

This is the reason that divorce is so complicated and painful. It is the ripping apart of two interwoven lives. That is why Jesus cautioned, “What God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6).

c. Man and woman will become one flesh - 1 Corinthians 6:15-20

1. Emotional oneness
2. Spiritual oneness
3. Sexual oneness

This is the reason; BTW, that sexual immorality is so terribly destructive. You become physically, emotionally and spiritually united to someone through the act of sexual union. There is no such thing as "casual sex."

Paul makes it clear the sexual union has *one-flesh* implications even when we don’t intend so, as when a man has sex with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:16).

C. God created Adam and Eve with moral innocence [Verse 25]

1. They were naked and unashamed

The idea of "nakedness" communicates far more than the absence of clothing. It has the sense of being totally open and exposed as a person before God and man. To be **naked . . . and not ashamed** means you have no sin, nothing to be rightly ashamed of. You really can be an "open book" to another person.

Application: The joy of moral innocence

God designed us for moral innocence. That, by the way, is the reason we have such a difficult time emotionally and spiritually coping with sin and its consequences – we were never designed to deal with it.

The good news is that God can restore the innocence of every man, woman and child who is willing to receive God's gift of forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Conclusion:

We live in a fallen, sinful, rebellious world. It is anything but perfect. But one day not long from now, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ will come again for us. He will destroy the existing heavens and earth and create a new one – a perfect one. In the meantime, you can be restored to the innocence that God created you to experience.

If you have never accepted God's gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ:

1. Repent of your sin

Repent = Metanoeo = "To think differently and to change course."

Romans 3:23 "... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death ..."

Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ..."

2. Reconcile with God

Reconcile = Apokatalasso = "To put right a broken relationship"

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

3. Realign your heart to God (your loyalties and allegiance)

2 Cor 5:15 "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

*Copyright, Bob Hallman, 1996-2020, All Rights Reserved.
Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the
New International Version ©1984 by International Bible Society.*