

What's the Message – Lesson Three

STANDARD OPENING

New Text

ANNCR: 1. Today we continue our study of Genesis, exploring the idea that man was created to have a perfect relationship with God.

Music concludes

NARATR: 2. Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. May the Lord bless you with today's study and awaken your heart to the realization that the first and foremost relationship of all . . . is our relationship with our eternal God. Amen

3. Today we look at some key verses in chapter two of Genesis. What is the overall picture you see there as you read chapter two? Do you see a picture of complete perfection? Our Western mind-set would not express it the same way the Hebrew does, but the place that God created for Adam is called a "garden" . . . nourished on all sides by four life-sustaining rivers. Then, in verse nine it says,

And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food

. . .

4. What does all this imagery suggest? Do you picture a luxurious place of beauty that amply supplies for your needs and comfort? Do you get the idea that this place is so wondrous that words can not adequately describe it?

5. The next thing we read is that man was assigned the duty to care for this place, *to till and keep it*, as it is expressed in verse 15. There is a vertical relationship implied in this statement. First, a duty is assigned from the superior to the inferior being. God is the superior, and here creates the vertical relationship that requires man to obey Him. This is the first, and foremost relationship that underscores all of man's relationships.

6. What is recorded next is something we usually read right over and miss its significance. Verse nineteen tells us that God brought all the animals and birds to Adam to see what he would name them. The significance of this is that the very act of naming a person or a thing can only be done by one who has authority over the object being named. So this establishes man's vertical superiority relationship with the beasts and birds that God created.

7. Then God stated that it was not good for man to live alone, and that He would create a helper, fit for him. And so began the ongoing horizontal relationship between Adam and other humans.

8. Now, what do we need to learn about these duties and relationships? Teacher, what is the message here?

TEACHR: 9. First, that everything begins with the vertical relationship between me and my Creator. Is that relationship functioning as it was intended? Are we communicating freely and regularly? Am I attentive to what God has instructed and expects me to do?

10. Second, am I at peace with myself, and are my relationships with others positive and constructive? And how do I conduct my relationships with the rest of God's creation? Am I fulfilling my duty to care for it, as God commanded?

11. The bottom line in all this is very simple and straightforward. There are two types of relationships: both vertical and horizontal. If my vertical relationship with God is not right, there is no way that my horizontal relationships within my self, with others, or with God's creation can be positive . . . as it was intended. To be "right with God", and happy in His presence, was what man was originally created to experience. But we wanted "more" and ended up with far less as a result.

Music up, then fade behind . . .

NARATR: 12. But that is the subject of our next lesson, which will deal with “man, the rebel” and its consequences.

STANDARD CLOSE

Study Aids

Discussion Questions and Suggested Readings for “What’s the Message?” Lessons

Lesson Three

Questions:

What is your image of the Garden of Eden?

What were the relationships established during this time in the Garden? Did you see the four duties God gave to Adam and Eve? Look at Gen. 1:28 and Gen. 2:15. Do you understand that these duties have been passed down to us? If so, how well are you fulfilling them? How well do we balance the instruction to “have dominion over the earth” with “dress, till, and keep it”?

Do you also see in these duties a set of instructions about the key to living a God-pleasing life? Have you ever questioned yourself about your purpose in life? Have you ever asked, “why am I here?” Can you think of celebrities who seemed on the outside to “have it all” and yet committed suicide because their life seemed empty and without fulfillment to themselves? What was the one relationship needed that was missing?

What was the first instruction God gave His children (see verse 28 of chapter one)? Is there any mention of an “alternative life style” here? Does this lead you to the conclusion that any attempted alteration of God’s plan regarding our life’s purpose and calling is – in fact – a perversion that will only lead to futility and despair?