

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER 2023

POWER FOR LIVING



Church Of God In Christ



CREATION

STUDENT MANUAL
LARGE PRINT

Adult Quarterly® - Ages 25 and Over

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST PRESIDING BISHOP



Bishop J. Drew Sheard

“A Mission Made Possible” Zechariah 4:6

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FROM THE PRESIDING BISHOP'S DESK



Greetings to each of you in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are living in an unprecedented time, a time of uncertainty and unrest. Systemic racism, police brutality, and an everchanging climate. You may ask, where are the answers, and whom can we trust? As Blood washed individuals, we have our hope in Christ and His Word that says, "No Weapon Formed against us Shall prosper". (Isa. 54:17).

Bishop James Whitehead and members of the Review Committee for the Power For Living curriculum have put together an array of Scriptures and Bible topics that will encourage every believer to stand fast in the knowledge that God is yet on the throne and victory is ours through the blood of Jesus Christ.

As we move forward, hold on to His unchanging hand, for His Word is true and His promises are ours to behold.

Be encouraged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "J. Drew Sheard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

J. Drew Sheard
Presiding Bishop
Eighth in Succession
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLISHING BOARD



Blessings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,

The fact that you are reading this letter indicates that God has blessed you to experience another year. We often transition from one season to the next and sometimes take for granted the privilege God affords us to see a new year, a new season, and a new day. Thank God for 2023.

Last year, I admonished every believer to take the time to examine their lives. I was led by the Lord to ask us to prepare our hearts daily to receive the seed of His word. The seed has no flaws—it is the Word of God; however, we must tend to the soil of our soul so that His Word will germinate, take root, and bring forth fruit. How do we do that? First, we exercise our faith and trust God as we encounter various trials and tribulations. Secondly, we take the time to feed our faith through prayer, fasting, and meditating on the Word of God day and night (Psalms 1:2). Our faith and our hope in Christ Jesus are vital to making sure that the seeds take root in the ground of our inner man.

God is tilling the soil of our hearts, as there are some personal things that we need to receive from the Lord. Thus, there are times when we need to hear a personal word from the Lord, and there are times when we need to know that we can walk on the waters of life. We need to know that the seeds of faith sown in us will sustain us through our storms, so the storms do not develop inside of us. It is the storms that water our faith, which will ultimately bring forth a harvest of joy. We need to know that our faith in God is not in vain. It is time for us to heal inwardly from these two and a half years of the COVID pandemic, and we must seek out God to make us complete on the inside as well as the outside.

To those loyal supporters of our literature, I want to personally thank you for sticking with us in these trying and troubling times. I ask that you continue to pray for the nations of this world. I ask that you pray for the unity of our country and pray for God to manifest Himself in our lives and in our churches in a new way. I ask that the Lord shift the winds of grace and favor in our direction so that we can experience Him as we have never experienced Him before.

God Bless you, and may He keep you,

Bishop Uleses Henderson, Jr.
Chairman of Publishing Board
Churches Of God In Christ Inc.

FROM THE DESK OF THE CHAIRMAN OF MARKETING



Greetings to all of God's people,

As I look back over a few things in my life, I cannot help but take pause to wonder how I managed to come through specific trials and tribulations. As a Born Again Christian, we are taught that it is God who brings us through periods in our lives in which some are of the most difficult. While this is true, we normally leave out the human factors in this equation. The human factors are, while I was going through these periods, I did not put a pause on my worship of God. In other words, before God brought me out, I was still yet worshiping him, I was still yet praising Him for His goodness, and for His grace and mercy alone.

Is there a time in your life that you can remember when your praises and your worship sustained you until God pulled you out of your tribulation? If so, then the additional reason why God was able to bring you through is that God responded to the continual offerings of your praise and your worship to Him. I honestly believe that's why some of us have not made it out! It is because we have removed this concept from our lives; it is praise that gets God's attention, but it is worship that touches His heart, and more importantly, it is worshipping God while going through that shows Him how much we are in love with Him.

As we study God's word this year, let us keep the theme God gave our Presiding Bishop in the forefront of all our endeavors. Regardless of what we may experience the "Mission is Possible". In our most trying times, we should stand firm on the fact that with man it may seem impossible, but with God "all" things are possible. Let us sincerely ask ourselves: Are we giving God the attention that He deserves in our lives? Are we placing God first in every situation? Are we making sure that God is our primary focus and not our secondary focus? While diving into your Sunday School lessons, keep those thoughts in the forefront of your mind; explore inwardly those convictions that you have, and be honest with yourself. Because honesty is the first step to bringing freedom into your lives, and freedom is the first step to giving God expressions of pure praise and pure worship. ***John 4:24 AMPC "God is a Spirit (a spiritual being) and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (reality)".***

God Bless you and my heave continue to smile upon you,

Yours for service,

Sandra S. Jones
Chairman, Marketing/Sales
Church Of God In Christ, Publishing Board.

ADULT QUARTERLY

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Special Features: Teaching Tips and Ideas, Quarterly Quiz

Bishop J. Drew Sheard
Presiding Bishop
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.

Bishop Uleses Henderson Jr., Esq.
Chairman, Publishing Board
Church Of God In Christ, Inc.

QUARTERLY QUIZ

These questions may be used in two ways: as a pretest at the beginning of the quarter; as a review at the end of the quarter; or as a review after each lesson. Questions are based on the Scripture text of each lesson (King James Version).

LESSON 1

1. What is the name of the sea creature that God created to play in the sea (Psalm 104:26)?

2. "At thy _____ they fled; at the _____ of thy _____ they hasted away" (Psalm 104:7).

LESSON 2

1. What were Adam's first words when God brought Eve to him (Genesis 2:23)?

2. "Therefore shall a man leave his _____ and his _____, and shall unto his wife; and they shall be one _____ (Genesis 2:24).

LESSON 3

1. According to Genesis 3:15, what will woman's seed do to the serpent's seed (Genesis 3:15)?

2. "...and Adam and wife _____ themselves from the _____ of the LORD God amongst _____ of the _____ (Genesis 3:8b).

LESSON 4

1. What did God tell Noah that He would never again do to the earth (Genesis 9:11)?

2. "I do set my _____ in the _____ and it shall be for a _____ of a _____ between me and the _____" (Genesis 9:13)?

LESSON 5

1. How did the city of Babel get its name (Genesis 11:9)?

2. "And the whole _____ was of one _____ of one _____ (Genesis 11:1).

LESSON 6

1. What rivers served as the boundaries of the land God promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18).

2. "And thou shalt go to thy _____ in _____; thou shalt be buried in a good _____ age" (Genesis 15:15).

LESSON 7

1. What was Sarah's name before the Lord changes it (Genesis 17:15)?

QUARTERLY QUIZ

2. “And _____ was an _____ years old when his son _____ was born unto him” (Genesis 21:5).

LESSON 8

1. How did god provide for Hagar and Ishmael in the desert (Genesis 21:19)?

2. “And I will make they seed to _____ as the stars of heaven, and will give unto they seed all of these _____ : and in they see shall all the _____ of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 26:4).

LESSON 9

1. What did Jacob name the place where he had a dream of a ladder with angels ascending and descending on it (Genesis 28:19)?

2. “And Jacob awaked out of his _____ , and he said, Surely the LORD is in this _____ ; and I _____ it not” (Genesis 28:16).

LESSON 10

1. What is the Lord’s name that He revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14)?

2. “And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto _____ , and that I should bring forth the _____ Israel out of _____ ” (Exodus 3:11)?

LESSON 11

1. What was the sign that cause the angel of death to pass over the houses of the Israelites (Exodus 12:13):

2. “Your _____ shall be without _____ a male of the first _____ : ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the _____ ” (Exodus 12:5).

LESSON 12

1. What did the Egyptians shout when they found their chariot wheels difficult to drive (Exodus 14:25)?

2. “And the LORD said unto _____ , Stretch out thine hand over the _____ that the _____ may come again upon the _____ , upon their _____ , and upon their horsemen” (Exodus 14:26).

LESSON 13

1. What filled the Tabernacle after its construction (Exodus 40:34)?

2. “And he put the _____ altar in the _____ of the _____ before the _____ ” (Exodus 40:26).

GOD CREATES

BIBLE BASIS: PSALM 104:5-9, 24-30

BIBLE TRUTH: God is to be praised for the majesty of and gifts in creation.

MEMORY VERSE: “O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches” (Psalm 104:24, KJV).

LESSON AIM: By the end of the lesson, we will: **DESCRIBE** God’s creative power and provision; **APPRECIATE** the wonder of God’s Creation; and **PRAISE** God for the resources available for us.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Psalm 104 — Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

LESSON SCRIPTURE

PSALM 104:5-9, 24-30, KJV

5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

104:24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS

A. Rebuke (Psalm 104:7) *gearah* (Heb.)—To express sharp, stern disapproval of; reprove; reprimand.

B. Bound (v. 9) *gebuwl* (Heb.)—Boundary, territory, border, landmark, or limit.
both socially and physically.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

AIM: Students will learn to live with confidence in God's ability to provide and protect.

INTRODUCTION

It is possible that the Israelites were in captivity during the time **Psalm 104** was written. Most people held against their will focus on the things they do not have—freedom, security, and happiness. While in bondage, captives complain, cry out to God, and shake their fists in anger. However, because some scholars attribute this psalm to David, the purpose would be different, because David lived long before the Israelites went into captivity. If David was indeed the author, he did just the opposite of raising his fists in anger when faced with difficult situations. In **Psalm 104**, he gave an account of the things that he knew could not be taken from him. He focused his attention on God's creation, emphasizing that it is God who creates, sustains, provides, and preserves. With Psalm 104, David affirms that God has provided all our needs through His creation.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will learn that it is God who creates, sustains, provides, and preserves.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES**QUESTIONS**

1. Why did God set a bound over the waters?
2. What happens when God sends forth His Spirit?

GOD ORDERS**PSALM 104:5–9**

Anyone who studies the Psalms quickly learns that commentators sort them into types, e.g., lament, praise, thanksgiving, trust, and so on. **Psalm 104** belongs in the category of creation psalms, or “Songs of Creation” in Walter Brueggemann's words, which also includes **Psalms 8, 33, and 145**. Brueggemann further lists these as “Orientation” psalms among his general psalm rubric of “Orientation–Disorientation–Reorientation.” As such, they not only do not contain complaints or crying out to God, but “in a variety of ways articulate the joy, delight, goodness, coherence, and reliability of God, God's creation, [and] God's governing law” (*The Message of the Psalms*, 19). **Psalm 104** is also a hymn of praise and has been paired with the similarly structured **Psalm 103**—the former praising the Creator-King and the latter praising the Redeemer-King, according to Willem VanGemenen (*Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 657).

5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

The first comprises “Material portion of our lesson, **verses 5–9**, what VanGemenen describes as the Formation of the Earth” (*Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 658), which comes after the psalm's introduction, praising God's royal, kingly splendor in verses 1–4. John Goldingay separates this portion of the lesson as God's “original activity” from the second portion (**verses 24–30**), which is His

“ongoing activity” (*Baker Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 3, 181). Another commentator calls our two sections “creating life” and “providing for life” (Mays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Psalms*, 335). In **verse 5**, God builds the earth like a skilled engineer with eternal permanence in mind. The writer alternates voices from third person to addressing God directly in **verse 6**, then back to third person in **verses 8–9**. Focusing here on the third day of creation (cf. **Genesis 1:9–10**), this account of creation is more poetic than the Genesis account. Whether creatively or descriptively reported, it seems clear that water completely covered our globe during its formation.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

GOD WORKS

PSALM 104:24–26

The language stresses God’s creative and allpowerful authority and uses nature’s greatest sounds to illustrate His incomparable power. Rushing water can be incredibly powerful and destructive, as amply demonstrated whenever a sudden flood destroys roads, houses, and anything else in its path—yet, like a timid child, all the water of the earth obeys the thunderous voice of its creator. A line from a popular song titled “My Redeemer Lives” by Nicole C. Mullins memorably captures the verse’s message, “Who taught the sun

where to stand in the morning? And who told the ocean you can only come this far?” (cf. **Job 38:8–11**).

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

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This second portion of our lesson, **verses 24–30**, comprises what VenGemerer describes as the “Glory of Animal Creation” (**verses 24–26**) and “Spiritual Sustenance of Earth” (**verses 27–30**) (*Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 658). In verses prior to this portion (**verses 10–18**), the psalm writer elaborates on God’s intentional interconnectedness of creation, e.g., water first finding its place and then becoming a resource for all of creation, sustaining life and fruitfulness, each part of which in turn becomes food, seed, or supply for myriads of needs. Then everything is refreshed and replenished by rain, God’s “celestial sprinkler” system (Goldingay, *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament*, 187). Everything God does—all His many “works” (cf. **verse 13**)

are wonderful, magnificent, and excellent in every way; individually or collectively, they reveal His wisdom, power, creativity, and glory—but humanity is His crowning achievement. Even though man is not specified here, he is eminently included among God’s “works” (see **Proverbs 8:22–31**).

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

From the perspective of ancient writers, both ships on the sea (see **Proverbs 30:19; Isaiah 33:21**) and the great sea creatures (see **Job 41:1; Psalm 74:14; Isaiah 27:1**) were marvels that particularly revealed to them God’s boundless creative ability. This verse uses a literary device called synecdoche, which is when a part is used to represent the whole—e.g., from homeless box to penthouse suite, representing all residences. So it is that ships on the great sea and beasts of all kinds in the sea represent all of creation.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

God is the source and sustainer; He is the maker and the maintainer—everything comes from Him and everything depends on Him, including and especially mankind.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. 30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

GOD PROVIDES

PSALM 104:29–30

In Hebrew, “breath” is *ruach* (RUakh), and means wind, breath, mind, or spirit. It is the same word used in **Genesis 1:2**, “The Spirit [ruach] of God moved upon the face of the waters,” as well as **Genesis 7:22** referring to all the creatures taken aboard the Ark, “All in whose nostrils was the breath [neshamah] of life.” Ruach is also used for both man and animals in **Ecclesiastes 3:21**.

A quick look at the verbs in the last four verses (**verses 27–30**) gives an overview of all God does: He gives food to all, He *opens* His hand and fills creation with good things, He *hides* His face, He *takes* away breath/life [ruach], He *sends* His Spirit [ruach], and He *renews* everything. Consider Goldingay’s unique translation of **verses 29–30**: “You hide your face, they panic; You gather up their breath, they perish; they return to their dirt; you send out your spirit, they are created; you renew the face of the ground” (*Baker Commentary on the Old Testament*, 193). Interestingly, in **Genesis 2:7**, when God “breathed into his [man’s] nostrils the breath of life” (emphasis added), the Hebrew uses *neshamah* (nesh-a-MA), which is essentially an interchangeable synonym for ruach. In **Isaiah 42:5**, God is described as “He that giveth breath [neshamah] unto the people . . . and spirit [ruach] to them.” Also in **Job 34:14**, both Hebrew words are used side by side to indicate either man’s life or death, “If he

gather unto himself his and his spirit [ruach] and his breath [neshamah].” Both *neshamah* and *ruach* are used for the English “breath” of life in **Genesis 7:22**.

The essence of the passage is that God is both giver and sustainer of the very breath and spirit within all living things—He alone gives, sustains, and takes life away.

Something noteworthy about creation through the eyes of faith is that it was not a one-time event that was then left to its own devices or random evolutionary winds of fate. Our God is an interactive God; He spoke creation into existence in the beginning as an expression of Himself (**Romans 1:20**) and He continues to actively maintain every part, especially tending like a loving father to His most unique creation of all, the *homo sapiens* who were made in His image (**Genesis 1:26–27, 5:1, 9:6**). Mankind, earth, and our entire universe are a divinely inspired, divinely created, and divinely maintained ecosystem that no other theory or philosophy other than Christian creationism wholly explains, much less celebrate.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will understand that God has provided every resource they will ever need.

In a downturned economy, it is easy to focus on what we have lost, things we cannot obtain, and the hopelessness we might feel. In **Psalm 104**, David chose to focus on God’s creation and the riches thereof. We will do well to challenge ourselves to identify resources we can use to produce what we need. Provision is all around us.

STUDENTS’ RESPONSES

AIM: Students will maintain grateful attitudes for what God has given them.

This week, challenge yourself to focus on what you have rather than on what you do not. Challenge yourself to see God the way David characterizes Him—bountiful, attentive, and open-handed. He has not forgotten you or your family. While you wait for Him, make daily gratitude lists and thank Him for what you do have. Then, pray for wisdom to use what you have to get what you need.

PRAYER

Dear Father, we thank You for Your ability to provide for us and protect us from evil and harm. Help us to step out in faith and trust in Your care for us. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

Christian apologists have done a good job of injecting the once-forgotten testimony of early scientists into popular culture to challenge the notion of a schism between science and faith. Nowadays, quotes like the following, from the appendix to Sir Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica*, flood the internet and even appear on tee-shirts: “This most beautiful System of the Sun, Planets, and Comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.” It is indisputable that most pioneers of Western scientific practice, like Newton (1643–1727), were proponents of “natural philosophy,” the belief that if you are studying nature, you are studying the works of God.

In a lecture on Newton's biblical theology recorded several years ago, Dr. Stephen Snobelen, a professor of the history of science and technology, actually used our lesson text to explain Newton's theological framework. Snobelen read **verse 24**, "O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches," and then further commented: "People like Newton, looking at passages like this... it confirmed their belief that when they studied nature—when they studied the cosmos—they were studying the handiwork of God. So, to work in what we would now call science was in effect an act of devotion at the same time."

The natural philosophers had a confidence that nature had an intelligible order that was the product of the rational mind of the Creator—the same Creator Who made our minds and endowed us with rationality. Those early scientists were convinced that human beings had the cognitive ability to uncover the rationality of the created world. But they also knew that human beings were fallen creatures themselves, with a proclivity to error and self-deception, so science needed investigative discipline and reproducibility of results. These fundamental tenets of scientific research were derived from our biblical understandings of God and Man.

HOW TO SAY IT

Manifold.	MAN-i-fold.
Leviathan.	le-VI-a-than.
Innumerable.	
in-NOO-mer-ab-ul.	

PREPARE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Read **Genesis 2:18-25** and study "God's Image: Male and Female."

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COMMENTS / NOTES:

DAILY HOME BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY

God Knows Our Every Need
(Matthew 6:25–34)

TUESDAY

The Greatness of the Creator
(Psalm 104:1–4)

WEDNESDAY

Nourishment for All Creatures
(Psalm 104:10–17)

THURSDAY

The Cycle of Days and Seasons
(Psalm 104:18–23)

FRIDAY

The Exalted God of Creation
(Psalm 97:1–9)

SATURDAY

Praise God, the Creator
(Psalm 104:31–35)

SUNDAY

God, Our Creator and Sustainer
(Psalm 104:5–9, 24–30)

GOD'S IMAGE: MALE AND FEMALE

BIBLE BASIS: GENESIS 2:18-25

BIBLE TRUTH: God shows concern for relationships by creating a woman to be a help meet with the man.

MEMORY VERSE: “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18, KJV).

LESSON AIM: By the end of the lesson, we will: **KNOW** how and why God created human companionship; **APPRECIATE** that God takes an active role in creating loving partnerships; and **IDENTIFY** spiritual practices that honor strong family bonds.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Genesis 1, 2; 5:1,2 — Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

LESSON SCRIPTURE

GENESIS 2:18-25, KJV

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS

A. Adam (Genesis 2:7) *adem* (Heb.)—The first man; created by God, in God’s image. God made Adam from the dust of the ground, breathing the breath of life into his nostrils.

B. Woman (v. 23) *issa* (Heb.)—The first woman; created by God to be a companion for Adam, the first man. Adam named her Woman because God made her from one of Adam’s ribs.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

AIM: That your students will develop a practice of relying on God for help with choices.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible and the first book of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament. The Jewish label for these books is “Torah,” which means teaching, while English Bibles refer to these books simply as the “Law.” Written by Moses, the leader of the enslaved Hebrew people (**Exodus 1**), the book of Genesis is a book about beginnings—the beginning of the universe, the beginning of creatures, the beginning of mankind, and the beginning of God’s activity in the life of the world. “In the beginning God created . . .” (**Genesis 1:1**) “And God said . . . and God made . . . and God blessed . . . and God saw. . .” (**Genesis 1 and 2**).

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will learn that God created in pairs so that His creatures would be dependent on one another.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

QUESTIONS

1. Why does God say it is not good to be alone?
2. When should a husband and wife not compete with one another?

GOD PROVIDES COMPANIONSHIP

GENESIS 2:18-20

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Here we see the combination of the name “LORD God.” The personal name for the God of Israel is represented by the four-letter consonants YHWH or Yahweh, also called the Tetragrammaton, while the name *El/Elohim* was used for God throughout the ancient Near East. The Hebrew word for “Lord” or master, *adonai* (**aw-dah-NAHY**), is substituted for the Tetragrammaton in English translations of the Bible in all capital letters to reflect the ancient Jewish tradition of not pronouncing the name of Israel’s deity out of deference. Ancient Jewish scholars inserted the vowels “ a-o-a” in *ado- nai* between the consonants to remind the readers to substitute *adonai* when they read YHWH aloud. God was concerned for the man’s social well-being and declared that the man (Heb. *adam*, **aw-DAWM**) should not be alone. Technically the man was not alone; God, along with the other heavenly beings (**Genesis 3:22**), was present with him. The announcement serves more as an explanation *asah* (**ah-SAW**) means “to do” or “make.” God is depicted as making the creatures by hand in chapter 2, in contrast to chapter 1, where God spoke and Creation came into existence.

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

The Hebrew verb for “form” or “fashion” is *yatsar*. The Lord God formed all of the living creatures (Heb. *nephesh chay*, **neh-FESH khah-E**) in the field and in the air out of the soil or earth (Heb. *adamah*, **ad-aw-MAW**). The image of God in **2:18–19** is as a potter at the wheel spinning and molding the creatures into shape. The prophet Isaiah drew upon this analogy to connote the relationship between God and the people (**Isaiah 64:8**). Isaiah expressed that we are all intimately related to God as living creatures formed by Him.

God brought the creatures to the man to name them. This included the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. The Hebrew noun *chay* (**khah-E**) means “living thing” or “animal” and conveys a wild beast that has not yet been tamed or domesticated. It also contrasts the difference between the man and the animals.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

The verb *yatsar* means “to form” or “shape.” God is depicted as a potter, making the creatures by effort and definite actions of His hands, in contrast to chapter 1, where God speaks, and Creation comes into existence. A man is worthy to have a partner (*ezer*) who is a help to him. However, if he was not worthy, she would be his adversary (*kenegdo*).

By naming the animals, the man asserted his authority or dominion over them, but this also included a caretaker role. Also implicit in this verse is that by naming

the creatures, the man would find one with whom he would be compatible. The man’s expectations probably rose and fell with each presentation of a new creature to name and define its function. The Hebrew verb “find” (*matsa*, **maw-TSAW**) means to “attain to” or “find,” as in a thing sought. However, he did not find the one that he was seeking or that God intended for him—one that corresponded to him.

GENESIS 2:21-25

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

The Hebrew noun *tsela* (TSEH-law) is translated “rib” or “side.” The term is translated “rib” in verse 21. However, the exact meaning is unknown. God had determined that in order to create a help meet compatible with the man, He would have to take a different route. The new creature would have to consist of substance taken directly from the man. God closed (Heb. *sagar*, saw-GAR) the place where the rib was taken, leaving it as if nothing had occurred. God is the surgeon par excellence who performs the task with precision and finesse.

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

The verb in Hebrew translated in verse 22 as “made” is not the same verb as in verses 18–19 that describes God as making or forming. The verb here is *banah* (baw-NAW) and means “to build,” as in a house or to perpetuate or establish a family. God fashioned or

shaped the rib into the form of the being that was the opposite of the man. The act of forming or shaping objects conjures images of simpler, plainer creations. However, to fashion suggests a higher form of creation where the creator has paid more attention to the details. One can imagine God being especially intentional about getting just the right partner for the man this time.

The understanding of “to build” in place of “made” is also appropriate as the creation of one like the man would be the necessary piece for beginning to build up the human family.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

The man’s response to the new creation was pure joy. He had finally found one like him who was made of bone (Heb. *etsem*, **eh-TSEM**) and flesh (Heb. *basar*, **baw-SAWR**). As if to emphasize that this creation was the one who would finally bring him the companionship he sought, he named her Woman (Heb. *ishshah*, **ish-SHAW**) because she was created from the side of the man (Heb. *ish*). This song of praise celebrated the culmination of God’s creative acts in the garden. What God declared was not good in **verse 18** (Heb. *lo-tov*) had been remedied in **verse 23**.

The creation of the woman introduced gender difference. In **Genesis 1:27** God created male and female, biological and physiological sexual categories. Man and woman are characterized by masculine and feminine gender roles in **2:23**.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall

cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The Hebrew verb *azab* (**aw-ZAB**) means “to leave,” “forsake,” or “loose.” For the man to leave his parents explains why males abandon or reject kin to marry and start new families with their female partners. The Hebrew word for woman, *ishshah* (**ish-SHAW**), is the same word for wife.

The Hebrew word for “cleave,” also cling or keep close, is *dabaq* (**daw-BAK**). It represents here the sexual union of the man and his wife. The differences inferred by gender are muted by the unity of the man and woman. The separateness of the two when God took the man’s bone and flesh to create the woman has now been reunited through their becoming husband and wife. The two becoming one flesh (Heb. *basar*, **baw-SAWR**) symbolizes this union.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

We come into this world naked. Children have no inhibitions about being naked. Parents will often permit toddlers to walk around in nothing but a diaper. Caretakers think nothing of bathing children together in the same tub. The fact that adults don’t make an issue of this allows children to feel comfortable and free in their nakedness. The nakedness of the man and woman represented their childlike innocence at the time of their creation. They were not ashamed (Heb. *bosh*, **boosh**) of being naked (Heb. *arome*, **aw-ROME**). This lack of shame attested to their lack of sin at this point. They could look upon each other without any need to cover or hide themselves. After the fall, God clothes them when their sin

brings about shame (**Genesis 3:20**).

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will recognize the importance of developing godly relationships.

Those of us who are healthy, have strong family ties, and are regularly connected to a church family can take companionship for granted. There are people among us who are shut in and because of illness, incarceration, low self-esteem, or poverty. Their circumstances exclude them from continuous human contact. With the popularity of social media, they are ignored and shut out because they do not have the existing technology, negating their efforts to maintain face-to-face contact.

STUDENTS' RESPONSES

AIM: Students will commit to regularly calling and visiting with a person who is shut in.

Commit to regularly telephone and visit with a person who is shut in. If they desire, show the person the existing technology and how to use it. If your church has a prison ministry, become involved. If your church is located in an inner city, become involved with the community. Be genuine and display the love of Jesus.

PRAYER

Dear Father, we declare that You are the only wise God and You know all things. We pray that You would help us to not lean on our own understanding but to acknowledge You in all our ways. We want Your Spirit to guide us in all the

choices that we make. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

The beauty and wisdom of God's creation, in its sexual duality of anatomy and physiology, is part of the subtext of the early chapters of Genesis. Specifically, the biblical narrator celebrates the introduction of gender difference through God's fashioning of the woman in the garden. This celebration has been muted in these modern times, as concepts like "gender fluidity" and "transgenderism" gain traction in popular culture. For example, in order to comfort sufferers of genuine psychological pain caused by gender dysphoria, there is an ill-advised campaign to redefine our understanding of gender and sex.

Dysphoria is a mental state in which a person has a profound sense of unease or dissatisfaction. *Gender dysphoria* describes the stress associated with the incongruence between one's biological sex and one's perceived gender. Gender dysphoria has historically been recognized as a psychiatric disorder. Even in the recent past, it was obvious to the healthcare community that psychiatric treatment was appropriate for someone whose view of self did not align with his or her chromosomal and biological identity. But there has been a massive shift in medical ethics recently. Advancements in plastic surgery and hormone replacement therapy have made it easier to help dysphoric patients transition outwardly, and now the healthcare industry is often choosing to engage in these invasive and costly treatments. The new presumption is that outward sex reassignment is a valid and

reasonable means of alleviating gender dysphoria.

The issues surrounding this very real mental affliction must be addressed by the Church. We actually have a perspective and biblical counsel that the sufferers of dysphoria desperately need. But we should become familiar with the details. An excellent introduction to the issue is the article on the Gospel Coalition website, “The Christian Response to Gender Dysphoria” (posted September 9, 2016). The author, Andrew T. Walker, makes a call for us to respond to this issue with compassion and truth. The information he imparts is edifying, and the charge he gives is persuasive. Explore the link and read it for yourself.

HOW TO SAY IT

- Cleave. CLEEVE.
- Naked.. NAY-ked.
- Ashamed. uh-SHAYM-d.

PREPARE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Read **Genesis 3:8b-17** and study “Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

Sources:

Gibson, John C. L. OT Daily Study Bible Series. Genesis, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1981.
 Speiser, E. A. The Anchor Bible, Vol. 1 Genesis: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. New York: Doubleday, 1962.

COMMENTS / NOTES:

DAILY HOME BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY

Living Creatures of Every Kind
(Genesis 1:20–25)

TUESDAY

Made in the Image of God
(Genesis 1:26–31)

WEDNESDAY

Formed from the Dust
(Genesis 2:1–9)

THURSDAY

In the Likeness of God
(Genesis 5:1–5)

FRIDAY

Made a Little Lower than God
(Psalm 8)

SATURDAY

Created in the Likeness of God
(Ephesians 4:17–24)

SUNDAY

Created Male and Female
(Genesis 2:18–25)

SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE

Responsive reading continued:

School/Class: But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 2:16**

School/Class: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. **Psalms 119:105**

Superintendent/Teacher: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. **1 Cor. 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all we know you are my disciples if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Galatians 5:13**

Superintendent/Teacher: But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

5. Singing.

6. Reading lesson by school and superintendent.

7. Classes assemble for lesson study.

8. Sunday School offering.

9. Five-minute warning bell.

10. Closing bell.

11. Brief lesson review by pastor or superintendent.

12. Secretary's report.

13. Announcements.

14. Dismissal.

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Sister Daihana Washington-Thorner - Superintendent

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Bishop Nelson J. Gatlin - Jurisdictional Bishop
Elder Chris Arnold, Sr. - Superintendent

West Angeles Church Of God In Christ
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Bishop Joe L. Ealy - Jurisdictional Bishop
Superintendent Jennie White - Superintendent

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Bishop Johnathan Logan - Jurisdictional Bishop
Audrey Terry - Superintendent

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Bishop Edwin Walker - Jurisdictional Bishop
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ISBN-13: 978-1-68087-042-8

ISBN-10: 1-68087-042-4

