

IT WAS VERY GOOD

Genesis 1:26-2:3

Lesson 2

Key Verse: 1:31

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

In lesson 1 we learned that God created the heavens and the earth (Ge 1:1). We learned that our lives are not an accident, but that we are created by God according to his sovereignty and purpose. In lesson 2 we want to learn about the human beings whom God created.

First, man has two natures. In five days God created the world and all material things, as well as the lower forms of life. On the sixth day he created animals and man. Man and animals were created on the same day. So man has an animal nature. But also, man was created in God's image. So men are different from animals. Men have an animal nature, and at the same time they have God's image in them. Men have an artistic, creative, God-nature.

Second, man's position. Because he was created in God's image (1:26,27), man is in a position just under God. Only when man keeps his position can he be a true man. Only when man has the image of God can he be happy, because he can grow in the image of God. One political leader was known as a man of no image. Then this gentle politician decided to make his image

tough. As a result, he became a mass-murderer next to Hitler. When men and women don't grow in the image of God, they fall down to the level of animals, and become like animals. They become like living dead men. When mankind slips from his position and falls down to the level of animals, then he becomes like an animal. He becomes flesh (6:3). When man fails to keep his position and falls to the level of animals, God is very sorry (6:5-8). Man is originally "Adam." "Adam" means dust or clay. Man is a lump of clay---he is weak. For him to keep his position as a man before God is very difficult, as difficult as for a small sailboat to keep its course as it crosses the ocean. But man is the lord of all creation. It is his sacred duty to keep his position as a human being.

Look at verses 26 and 27 again. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." When God made mankind, he made them in his own image. Verse 26 refers to God as using the plural, "our image." This is just a Hebrew expression. There are two important meanings which can be found in the fact that man is created in the image of God (i) We human beings resemble God. "Image" here refers to God's attributes. God is holy; there is something holy about us. God is love; there is also godly love in us. God is almighty; man's possibilities are limitless. A lion has great strength, but because he is only an animal, he uses all his great strength in catching

his prey. (ii) Man grows in the image of God. He is the lord of creation. He rules over all things. God made man in his own image so that he might rule over the whole world. The hope of God's children is to become more and more like God, to grow more and more in his image.

Third, man is mission. Read verses 26-28 again. God had a purpose in creating man in his image. He wanted man to rule over, to have dominion over all other created things. "To rule over" the world means that God has appointed man to be the steward of the world, to oversee and care for all creation. Men cannot be selfish. One young man received very much help from others during his time of need. But when he made some money he used it all up on himself. Such a man is not a steward; he is a selfish man. A selfish man is an animal man. He is like a father tiger who, all by himself, before the eyes of his hungry tiger cubs, eats up the prey the mother tiger hunted. It is a great blessing to be given the task of being the steward of the world that God has created (28). And this is the mission that God has given to us human beings. So at his birth, a man enters the world for a definite purpose in God.

No one is happy until he finds the purpose of his life in God. Man has a definite mission for which God created him. There is something that God has given him to do in this world. We can almost say that man = mission and mission = man. Each one of us has a mission which God has given him. If one would fulfil his mission he must work. So the person who doesn't like to work is giving up his divine right as a human being. David's greatness did

not lie in the fact that he was a king or that he had great ability. He was great because he served the will of God in his own generation (Ac 13:36). Paul's greatness does not lie in his great scholarship or in his zeal. He was great because he obeyed the world mission commission given him by God; he gave his life to fulfill his mission (Ac 20:24). Many say that Abraham Lincoln's greatness lies in his honest character. But in reality, He was great because he received from the Bible God's mission to protect human rights, and he fulfilled that mission.

In our times, men and women of mission look like strange people. But God sees them as great. No matter what we are called to do, we must not let what other people think of us influence us too much. We must seek to accomplish the mission that has been given us by God.

Fourth, man has the Sabbath (2:1-3). God worked hard for six days and God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. On that day, God rested. God gave the Sabbath day to man as a day of rest. The Sabbath is a holy day. "Holy" means "set apart" or "different." God set the Sabbath day apart from all the rest of his creation and gave it to man as a day of fellowship with God. If there is no rest through fellowship with God, man withers. The word "Sabbath" means "rest." On the Sabbath we must stop doing worldly things and go to God for a new filling of spiritual strength, love and joy. We can receive God's love and strength from him by studying the Bible and praying and by serving God and God's sheep. People of our times have forgotten the law of the Sabbath. As a result, the people of our times are overflowing

with tiredness---even though they have so many long week-ends and holidays. But Christians must keep the Sabbath holy and on that day have deep fellowship with God. We must prepare to enter the eternal Sabbath rest that God has prepared for us.

Fifth, God was happy to see man (31). Look at verse 31. "God saw all that he had made and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning---the sixth day." On the first five days of creation God made all things. On the sixth day he made man. He created the heavens and the earth and all things, and after each day's work, "God saw that it was good." But when he finished creating man on the sixth day, "God saw all that he and made, and it was very good." The adverb "very" is added. There are two meanings that we can find here. In the first place, God is saying that of all his created things, man is the creature in which he has special joy. In the second place, God thinks that each of us is the best, and very good. When we consider this, we realize that we exist because God created us. In God's creation, there are all kinds of people. Each person thinks that he or she is the best one or the worst one. One lady thought that she was too tall and slim. But after studying the Bible she realized that although she does not have Arabian beauty, she has North American beauty. Since then, she has studied the Bible harder and she was convinced that she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

One finds his own individuality as he comes to know God personally and experiences God's life. He finds his individuality in God's word of truth.

There are many people who have very good human backgrounds and good human circumstances, but who have never become individualized. Unless one finds himself in God and lives before the eyes of God he cannot form his own individuality. So they have no individual personality. They do not know who they are. They cannot be true to themselves because they have no inner integrity. In the end, they do not know how to live or why they live. They do not know why they work so hard. But their most serious problem is that they do not know who they are. It is because they do not know the truth of God who created mankind and said, "It was very good." Some people try to find themselves---their own individuality---in their human background and conditions. One American woman's meaning of life was her kind husband. One day he died in a car accident. She sought meaning in her career as the director of the auditing department in city hall. But she was dismissed when the administration changed. She was empty and her life was without meaning. Then she found herself in God.

Verse 31 says, "It is very good." Human conditions cannot be the problem. God made everyone an individual, with his own special characteristics and qualities. He made each person for a purpose, so there is no one whom we could do without. The one who, to us, seems ordinary-looking may have a heart like beautiful satin. When one young man was in college, he lived for three years with his aunt. She was a rather ordinary looking woman in her outward appearance, but her heart was as beautiful as fine silk. Her beauty came from her faith in Jesus. In God's sight there was meaning and purpose for small Israel as well as for the

large and powerful Roman Empire.

One does not need to worry about what others think of him. Each one must think rather, what do I think of myself before God? Most importantly, what does God think of me? God created me and was very pleased. We must receive this truth in our hearts. We must realize that out of the 5 billion people in the world, God made each of us with a special nature and character and gave a special meaning to each life. It's a wonderful thing to discover one's self. When I believe that God made me and was very pleased, then new possibilities appear for amazing and wonderful self-discovery and great self-fulfillment. I began to find the real joy of being human.

In this lesson we learn that God the Creator appointed man to be the steward of the whole world. When God made each of us he said, "It was very good."