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5 FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS IN CREATION STORY

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Understand that there are some truths we lose from time to time. I understand that sometimes we've forgotten the foundation of our lives. Instead of saying I want us to get back to Genesis (although that may be important) I think what's more important – I want us to go forward with the book of Genesis. I want you and I to see, as we take a look at creation story, forms a foundation for God's purpose in our lives. It doesn't just tell us the truths of what happened a long time ago at the beginning, truths I might have been interested in when I went to school. It talks about truths specific to everyday life.

Sometimes we study Genesis, especially the first chapter, so in depth we miss some of the big truths that are here.

There are details in the first chapter of the book of Genesis that are amazing, fascinating, and we need to look at them to fill in the picture. But today what I want us to do is see the picture first, see why the details are there, to see the simple truths that God wants to make sure we get in the book of Genesis.

The story of Genesis is a very simple story. It's one of the simplest books in the whole Bible to outline. It starts out with the story of creation. Then it tells us the story of Adam and Eve. Then it tells us the story of Noah, then Abraham, then Isaac, then the story of Jacob and then the story of Joseph. That's the book of Genesis, how it's outlined. That's how God put it together. It's the story of what God has done in these people's lives and how He can work in our lives today in an incredible way.

The author of Genesis was a man named Moses. He wasn't living when Adam and Eve were, so how did he write these things down? First, God revealed some things to him. God had to reveal to him what He did on the first day and on the second day and on the third day. So Moses had some supernatural revelation that helped him to write this book. He also had some history that

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was passed down to him. The Jewish people were very good at passing down history exactly. I believe God had inspired them to do this. First they passed it down by word of mouth, then Moses wrote it down. He wrote these things down during the time of the Exodus, when the people were going from 400 years of slavery to a new Promised Land. He wanted to remind them of the truths about themselves that they should never forget.

I. HOW IT BEGAN

“In the beginning” are the first three words of the book of Genesis. But it’s really the fourth word that is the most important – God. God, in the beginning. *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* Those are ten words in English, seven in the Hebrew language which the Old Testament was originally written in. They answer four fundamental truths about my life and your life.

We all ask the question, What is all this? We look around asking, what is all this creation I see. How in the world did it come into being? When did it begin? How did it begin and who did it? This one simple phrase tells us. In this phrase comes together two great sources of human knowledge. *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* One of the ways you and I get knowledge is through God’s revelation. God just shows us. He just tells us things. That’s what the Bible is all about, God showing us what He wants us to do. He reveals things to us.

He also made some things. A second way you and I have some things revealed to us is through nature. We can look at things that God has made and see what He’s done. Nature and revelation – both are useful when it comes to learning what God wants us to do. Science and observation, looking at nature by itself, you can’t discover God by that alone. You get a clue that maybe something is going on that’s bigger than me but we need God also to reveal Himself to us. That’s why He gave us nature and the Bible both. That’s why He created the heavens and the

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earth and why He gave us the book of Genesis to tell us He created the heavens and the earth.

Sometimes people want to use science to discover God. Cut out the revelation part altogether as the source of knowledge and say all we've got is science. But we can't do that. God doesn't work that way. He has chosen to work in invisible ways. He's chosen to work through faith. Trying to discover God solely through nature is like saying you want to discover love with a steam shovel. It just won't work. It's the wrong instrument. If you and I want to discover God, we've got to have Him reveal Himself to us.

Nature is devised to teach us truths about God. Who made the heavens and the earth? If God made the heavens and the earth, and He knew that someday He wanted to show you and I some things about Himself, do you think it's an accident that there are things in His creation that are perfectly designed to express to us who He is? No. God made the heavens and the earth because He could show us some things about Himself. Nature and revelation are not contradictory; they're complementary. They complete each other in a lot of ways. They're not two separate sources. The same God made both of them. He made it. He built into what He made examples to teach us. God wanted to teach us the value of working hard. There's several Proverbs about that. So He made an ant, the tiniest little thing you can see and look what an ant can accomplish if it works hard –back and forth, back and forth. They never get tired. And they're there the next day. There's something about that that teaches us the value of industriousness. God knew that someday He would want to teach us about dependence, about what it means to depend on God. So He made a sheep. He knew He was going to use the sheep He was creating to teach you and I about depending on Him. The sheep is totally dependant and it's pretty dumb. He uses the sheep to teach people how they need to depend on Him. I've got to believe that when God made the sheep He had to laugh. Can't you just see the joy in His heart when He realized it would be perfect? He made it so when it falls over it can't get up without help. It will

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be a perfect object lesson to them about who He is. The beginning in the word and world show us who God is and who man is!

2. God is a personal God.

Forget all the science, all the arguments. The biggest problem of the theory of evolution is that it depersonalizes God. It makes God step back from His creation that He set in motion by a series of events that eventually led to you being created and animals being created – life being created. That's very different then in the beginning God spoke and this happened. God spoke and we existed. God spoke and plants existed. See how different that is?

Even science has struggled with the theory of evolution because they realize that it's just theory. What I want to say to you and what we need to teach to our kids is don't let an unproven theory keep you from seeing the hand of a personal God at work in creation, at work in my life, at work in your life. That's why this is a battleground. That's why this is so important because He is a personal God.

Austin Clark in the quarterly review of *Biology* said this "As far as it concerns the major groups of animals, the creationists seem to have the better argument. There's not the slightest evidence than any of the major groups ever arose from any other." He's one of many scientists that believe evolution is a theory that people are still working on. It's still developing. They're still trying to figure it out. Have you noticed that the more the theory of evolution develops, the closer it seems to be getting in some camps to what the Bible actually says? What's the Big Bang theory all about anyway? It happened all of a sudden. It happened all at once. There's a lot of explanations for that that are scientific. But when it comes down to it, you and I believe it happened all at once. But it wasn't energy, it was the Word – God's Word immediately spoken. This is a big deal. We all intuitively know (and even those who are not Christians, who are on the other side of this issue, know) that we're not just talking about science facts. We're talking

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about how the world came into being. We're talking about us. We're talking about our view of ourselves and our view of this world. Jesus is alive and Darwin was a man who had a theory who is dead. It's a theory that depersonalizes God.

3. The Bible is reliable.

Would you agree that the way that you read the first page of a book determines how you're going to read the rest of the book? If you open a book and the first page says, "Three cups salt," you're going to think, "Cookbook." If you open a book and the first page is humorous you start to think this is a funny book. If you open a book and the first page has all kinds of equations, you close the book immediately! Right? The first page determines how you read the book.

When somebody comes to me and, because of a scientific theory, says, "You can't trust the first page of this book. I know it says God said it and it happened but that's not really what happened. That's just poetic," do you think that's going to affect the way they read the rest of the book? He'll start to think maybe everything is sort of poetic, maybe it says God said that but it doesn't really mean that. It's an incredibly important battle.

The fact is, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" That fact is a foundation of purpose in our lives. It's the foundation of purpose. A personal creator, personally made the heavens and the earth, personally made me and He has a personal plan for my life. If He didn't create me personally, how could He plan for my life personally?

Henry Morris said this, "If the Bible's truths about creation are not acceptable to the modern mind, then there's no reason to think that the Biblical commandments are applicable to modern morality or that the Biblical truths about the future are meaningful in planning for your future."

It's a battle for how we're going to read this book and the importance of it. That's why this is so important. That's why you hear people talking about it.

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4. GOD'S WORD STARTS EACH AND EVERY DAY.

Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26.*"and God said"*. That's how each day started. It's one of the most striking things in the first chapter of Genesis. Is this a poetic way of saying through some unknown process that God set the wheels in motion and eventually certain things would come out of that process? No. God spoke and things existed. That's the power of God. That's the creativity of God. If you miss that you miss the essential truth in the book of Genesis. God said it and it happened.

Everything was created out of nothing. That's hard for me to envision. For me, creativity is trying to rearrange something. We take a lump of clay and rearrange it into a pot but the clay was already there. We rearranged something. For God, creativity is speaking something into existence. It wasn't there. Nothing was there and then it was there.

Everything you see in creation is an expression of the creative mind of God. It's not just wonderful science. It's not just an interesting fact. It's an expression to you and I of the creative mind and power of God. Imagine God says, "Land" and there's land! God says, "Water, ocean" and they're there, separated from the land. God says, "Tiger," and there's a tiger. It's incredible. God spoke a word "whale", "flower", "rose", "red", "yellow" and they came into existence.

Everything's an expression of the creative mind of God and everything is an example of the supernatural power of God.

Is what I'm talking about scientifically impossible? To speak and it exists? Yes, it is! It is scientifically impossible. But it's supernaturally powerful. Science studies how creation works and does a pretty good job of it a lot of times. But it does not follow that a study of how things work right now will always tell you how it came into existence. If I held up an orange in front of you and you'd never seen an orange tree and said, "What does this grow on?" would you know? You could guess – a tree, a bush. If I asked you what okra grew on, would you know? An okra

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tree? An okra vine? What do they grow on? (They're actually a little plant. I used to grow them in the back yard.)

We live in a scientific age. There's a lot of benefits to our scientific age. But don't let anyone, anything, steal from you the awe that you and I need to have in God's creation. It is sad when we become so sophisticated that we can't say, "Wow! Look at what God's done!"

Someone on our research team wrote, "The creation story reminds me that God is all powerful, all wise, the God of variety and worthy of worship." That's it! That's the whole idea. God's word to start each day.

5. GOD'S JOY TO END THE DAY

The word "*it was good*," impacts our purpose in powerful ways still today. When God looks at His creation and says, "Good!" that means something. That means material things aren't evil in and of themselves. There's some people that believe that way. Just because it's material, because it's money, because it's a house, because it's a car, because it's a church building, or just because it's a human body, just because it's material it has to be evil. That powerfully impacts you and your purpose. It is literally a Joy stealer.

If you believed that deep down, you end up one of two ways. You end up as a puritan or a playboy. If you think everything around you is evil, you think, "I can't touch anything because it's all evil. I've got to become a monk and go up in the mountains somewhere. I've got to get away from everything." Or you think, "I'm living in an evil world. I'm already corrupted. So why not? I may as well go and do everything I want to do." Down through history that's been the two results that have come when this false teaching has been allowed in the church. And it is false teaching.

When I begin to see that everything God made is good and useful for His purposes, it impacts the way I see me and it impacts the way I see everything that He's made. Instead of saying, "I want

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to stay away from these things,” we start to think, “I want to use these things.” I want to use these things for God’s glory. I want to use them for the good that He created them for. Has evil come into this world? Yes. Are there evil things in this world? Yes. But everything that God created is good and I want to use it for His glory. It is a truth that grow the joy in our heart! Another truth is, God rejoices in what He made. He gets to the end of each day and takes a minute to step back and look at what His word created. He rejoices in what He made. I know some believers who feel they can’t enjoy anything until they get to heaven. They’re go around with a spiritual frown on their face and don’t enjoy anything. What are we going to do in heaven for all eternity? We’re going to praise God for what He’s made, for what He’s done. Start practicing now. Don’t wait until you get there. Start practicing now telling God how grateful you are, and telling God what good things He’s done in your life. Start enjoying what he has made.

6. God is Orderly

It’s striking. Day 1, Day 2, Day 3... If God had wanted to could He have snapped His fingers and everything come into existence all at once? Could He have one it that way if He had wanted to? Yes, He’s God. He can do anything. But He decided not to do it that way. He decided first to do “this” and then to do “this” and so on. He created in a orderly fashion!

Light and darkness was on Day 1 and the sun, moon and stars on Day 4, so one of the questions people have always had about Genesis is what kind of light was created on the first day. It wasn’t the sun, moon, and stars, was it? It was a different kind of light. What kind of light was it? I don’t know! I wasn’t there! But it was a light! Scientifically, those of you who know more about this than I do could talk about the physics of light and how in incredible ways we’re learning things about black holes and phasars and all those kinds of things that help us to understand that God could have created some kind of light that coalesced into the sun, the moon

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and the stars. He set time up in incredible ways to do this.

Day 2 the atmosphere, the firmament was created. Day 3 the land, the seas were separated the plants, the trees. Day 4 the sun, moon and stars which created not only light but also seasons and days and years. Sea creatures and birds on Day 5. Land animals and mankind – which we're going to focus on mankind next week in our study – on Day 6. On Day 7 creation was completed and God rested.

Here you have God's Day Timer for week one of all of creation. This was His To Do list and He spoke and it came into existence. Light, sky, water, vegetation were done in order. Plants "according to their kind" – that means all the families and kinds. Those are all God-created. It's incredible how organized God's creation is. We can see it as we look at it.

Definition of creation: an orderly unfolding of the mind and the purposes of God.

Jeremiah 29:11 *"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope, plans to give you a future."* If you haven't memorized that verse, my challenge to you is to memorize that verse. As we take a look at God's purpose in our life I can't think of a better verse to remind me of the fact that the God who has a plan for all of creation, one of the reasons He has a plan is because He has a plan for my life.

7. REST IS KEY.

Why did God rest? Did He have to rest? Was He tired? God doesn't get tired. Isaiah 4 tells us *"Is God like a man who gets tired?"* No, God doesn't get tired. He wasn't tired but He rested.

Three reasons from scripture.

1. God rested because He was finished. Hebrews 4:3 *"God's word was finished when He made the world."* Is that an important truth? Yes, it is! This universe is not some vast unfinished symphony. God finished what He started out to do. You and I, God's creation, are not works in progress. This universe is a finished work of creation marred by the presence of

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sin. But it's finished and it would have been perfect if sin hadn't come in. Does that create a difference in the way we look at His world? Yes.

It's the difference of looking at a house that just has the wood frame built up and saying, "I've got to finish this. I've got to get the materials to build this," and looking at a beautiful Victorian mansion that is in need of some restoration. You and I, His creation, we're not like the frame house that needs someone to come in who has the intelligence to finish it. We're like the beautiful mansion with some need of some restoration.

When we look at what God made, when we look at ourselves, we think, "Maybe it will get better someday." The truth is, it already was better. God made it perfect. Do you want purpose?

Don't try to do better, building out of the materials of your own life. That's a dead end. It might work for a few weeks, a few months, maybe even a few years. But it's a dead end. Because you and I don't have the materials to build true, lasting purpose. If you want purpose, ask for God's restoring love to be set free in your life. There's something really freeing about that when you recognize it's not all up to me. God wants me to rest in His restoration process to restore the person He wants me to be.

2. God rested to give us an example to follow. He rested at the end of the week to give us an example for our week. You and I need rest. We were built that way. If we don't rest, we'll break down. God says in Exodus *"Work and get everything done during six days each week. But the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the Lord your God. The reason is that in six days God made everything. The sky, the earth, the sea and everything in them. On the seventh day He rested."*

I would suspect not many of us are resting one day out of the seven. And that's one of the things that is stealing joy, stealing purpose in our lives.

How you rest is between you and the Lord. You need to read the scripture because it's got some

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pretty good clues for you. I'm not going to give you answers because this is a favorite campground of legalists. There are all kinds of people who will tell you, "Here's how you need to rest on your day of rest." They have all kinds of rules about it. You can't do this or that. Finally, you're so concerned about the rules whether you're breaking or not breaking them it's a day of work just keeping all the rules.

But you and I need rest. We need rest physically, we need rest emotionally, we need rest spiritually where we recharge. For most of us that day of rest is going to be the day of worship. That's the best day because you're already at church, already focusing on the Lord. For people like Roger, that's not a day of rest so we need to find another day. Every pastor needs to make a day of rest beside Sunday. Because without it you break down. No matter how important the task, you break down.

3. God Rested To fulfill His plan. God rested on the seventh day because He had a plan for your life and my life. Hebrews 4 *"There remains then a Sabbath rest for the people of God. [This is one of those deep truths of the Bible that we don't come across often enough.] For anyone who enters into God's rest also rests from His own work just as God did from His. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest."* What is this "Sabbath rest for the people of God"? What's the writer of Hebrews talking about? As long as I'm depending upon my work, the things that I do to get me to heaven, there's no way I'm going to make it. I can work as hard as I want, there's no way. But when I rest from my work and I enter into God's rest – faith in Jesus Christ – guess what? That's the key! That's what brings me to Him. So the Sabbath day was also a picture of what Jesus Christ was going to do for us not only now but through all eternity. That's why God rested.

The fascinating thing to me is that the ultimate truths that begin everything, that effect everybody's life in all of creation, also effect every day of my life. They can be brought down to

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very simple things.

God at the beginning of everything in my life. That's what makes me a person of purpose.

God's word to start each day. God's word speaks His character, His will into existence in my life. God's joy to end each day. Rejoicing and thanking God for what He's made.

God working through a process in my life. He used a process to begin this world. He uses a process in your life and my life to grow us in Christ. He pictured for us at the very beginning, everything He was going to do in our lives in an everyday way. And rest is a part of God's creative purpose in my life.

The truths of the first chapter of Genesis are ultimate but they're also personal, they're also individual. Look at the homework and let me make them even more individual. Let me challenge you to take one of these things and do them this next week.

Take fifteen minutes this next week to set down and think about the fact that God planned my life before I was born. Envision it. Psalm 139 says all the plans were written in His book when not one of my days were in existence. Envision God writing in a book plans for your life. If you can't think what they would be, just marvel in the fact that He has a plan and He'll reveal it step by step in my life and your life.

Begin each day with God's word. Take about ten minutes at the beginning of each day and read through God's word. You might start reading through the book of Genesis as we study it together.

Take five minutes at the end of each day this week and thank God for something in your life that you think He would look at and say, "Good!" This is going to be very difficult for some of you. It's easy to worry, to think about something God wouldn't like. That's easy to think of. One of the keys to my growth or your growth, my purpose or your purpose is hearing God say, "Good!" in our lives. I'm not saying all the time. There are times in my life when I need to hear Him say,

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“That was wrong. You need to turn your life around there.” But I also need to hear Him say,

“Good!” Work at this, seeing God at work in your life.

You might want to ask God as you’re going to sleep as we think about the process of God working “What’s the next step in my growth in You?” See if He gives you an answer when you wake up.

Rest! Take an actual, real day off this week. Not next week or next month. If you haven’t been resting and you try to save it until next week, you won’t be able to do it. It’s going to be hard the first few times, but if you’re going to live out the purpose God has for your life, it’s a big enough purpose that you’re going to need to build some rest in your life to accomplish all that God wants you to accomplish.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

If you need a new beginning in God, come up front to give your life to Christ-so you may be forgiven and God can start his restorative plan for your life.

Prayer:

Lord, as we pray together, help us not to lose the awe. Help us not to see these truths as familiar. Instead, Jesus, help us to recognize You as creator. Help us to be still and to know that You are God. Not a far away God. Not a God who set the universe in motion and then walked away. But a personal God. You personally made everything we see. You personally made every person in existence. You have a personal plan for our lives. That’s amazing. Yet it’s what You told us about Yourself. We trust that fact. So Lord, we ask tonight, that You continually help us get to know You personally and follow You personally and love You in a personal way. We ask this in Jesus’ name, Amen.