

Series: Chaos to Order
Genesis 1-11
Title: Order and Discipline
Genesis 1:1-3

Introduction

The Book of Genesis begins with the words "In the Beginning." Those words are translated as "origin" from the Greek language. Genesis sets the stage for the redemptive story of the Bible. Genesis opens with God confronting chaos and disorder and bringing order and beauty in a new work of Creation.

God creates the first human and appoints them to rule over the Earth. Adam and Eve are given free choice and can choose to trust God for wisdom to rule that will result in blessing for the entire world. However, these first humans choose to define good and evil on their own terms, which begins a destructive cycle that brings chaos and disorder back into God's good world.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis reveal this repeated theme of rebellion, from Adam and Eve in the garden to the next generation, Cain and Abel, and on to the "sons of God," the flood, and finally, Babylon. Of course, God continues to give humanity a chance to bring His blessing into the world, but they continually choose their own way. But even in our rebellion, God promises that a savior will come to defeat and eliminate evil from the Earth.

God's plan beginning in Genesis 12, is one unified story that leads us to Jesus. The theme of the Bible is not that difficult to understand. God creates a good world and commissions humans to rule it, but we choose rebellion again and again.

When God first looks at the world he made, he declares it good. He chooses humans as his partners to rule over the Creation, but the humans choose to do things their way, which ultimately leads to their death. The first eleven chapters of the Bible record God's goodness and humanity's repeated rebellions, which introduce violence and disorder. Chapter 12 of Genesis begins God's response to human evil with his redemptive plan.

Have you ever asked the question: Who am I? Why am I here? What makes me special as a human being? The Bible addresses these questions head-on in the very first chapter of Genesis. Genesis One outlines our spiritual potential, our human limitations, and even our God-given purpose. From the very beginning, God places humans in the middle of Creation and elevates us above all the other creatures.

God gives us spiritual identity the moment He breathes life into Adam. It's a union between God and man that continues to the present day. Our search for why we are here is what points us back to the beginning of life. People of every age and corner of the globe have invented a creation myth to explain and define their existence.

Science can't describe the beginning of the world because science doesn't know how we got here. Scientific speculation doesn't even begin to address our deepest questions about the origins of human nature. We need a creation story that expresses our greatest hopes and aspirations.

We need a standard that measures our highest potential for becoming what we were created to be.

I. God's Standard of Order

The Judeo-Christian story of Creation has shaped much of our Western culture and the view of who we are. The Hebrew view of Creation represented a concept of God, humanity, and the universe radically different from the prevailing pagan ideas. Even though almost 4000 years have passed, Genesis remains an astoundingly contemporary description of our identity and relationship to the world around us. Genesis reminds us that there are no limits to our spiritual potential and that despite the feelings of loneliness and namelessness so prevalent in our society, the believer has a direct spiritual connection to the Creator, our Heavenly Father.

In this twenty-first century, we have already acquired the frightening power to manipulate life on a genetic level and the capacity to destroy ourselves and the whole world. Many are talking about how artificial intelligence is beginning to dominate every area of life. That thought alone ought to challenge us to revisit the dream of our beginning.

God's dream for humanity is not the American Dream but the Heavenly Dream. It is our spiritual birth that causes us to reach our human potential. The story of Creation itself begins with light and with goodness. In just thirty-four verses, Genesis details the Creation of the entire universe. From a single creative force comes a complex world designed to support every life form in every habitat, from creatures of the deep, birds of the air, to animals that creep upon the Earth. Man is then elevated above all other creatures and charged with solemn obligations.

Let's focus for a few minutes on just what God, the Creator, was doing and think of the first lines of Genesis as the stage directions that precede the drama of life.

II. God's Blueprint or Order

The first Chapter of Genesis gives us God's outline and order of Creation. As the curtain rises on Act One of the Unfolding Drama of Redemption, there is no audience, not even a stage. There is only chaos and a formless void before the Creative Genius goes to work.

Verse one says, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." This first line inspires a chain reaction of questions. What came before the beginning? What was God doing before He began creating? Who is He? Where did He come from, and who created Him? Why is He called God, anyway?

Do you know Genesis does not address a single one of these questions? Genesis gives us no biography of God. There isn't any elaborate background on how God came into being. The Bible states the existence of God as self-evident. And that is what serves as the basis for all spiritual faith. In the book of Hebrews, Paul writes, "Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is and that He rewards those who diligently seek him."

Verses 2 through verse 5 tell us, "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:2-5 NKJV)

This is God's first creative act. We see God at work preparing the world for humanity's arrival. He begins by building a secure infrastructure that every infant must have to establish trust in its world. Children learn to trust through predictability and routine.

When a baby cries the new mother rushes in to see what's the matter. And every time the baby cries, guess what. Mom comes. It doesn't take long for a baby to associate crying with getting mom's attention. But it isn't long until mom wises up and starts getting little junior on a schedule. If Mom is going to stay in charge, then Junior will have to fit into Mom's schedule! Unfortunately, today, too many moms and dads are fitting into little junior's schedule. And it's little wonder our world is becoming so childish and chaotic.

Children learn to trust the consistent patterns and routines of life. That's why we need laws and rules and guidelines. We need to know the parameters to give our life definition and direction. We need to know what the rules are. We find balance when we can trust the rules to be reliable and unchanging.

When mom and dad and society can't make up their minds about the rules, the kids are left confused and frustrated because they don't know what to expect from their world. Without order or predictability, you can't draw conclusions or make lasting decisions and commitments.

Consistency is demonstrating order and predictability over time. And that is what builds personal discipline. If you're not self-disciplined, it's probably because you never learned or didn't have the opportunity to learn consistency.

III. God's Plan for Balance

If you've come from a very defined background where you knew the rules and what to expect if you broke them and accepted and learned to trust that order and predictability, you are probably very self-disciplined as an adult. But if you were out breaking all the rules, or your parents were inconsistent in their parenting style, you probably still struggle with self-discipline.

Anyone whose been a Foster Parent knows that the first thing a social worker tries to create in a troubled child's life is order and routine. Without a few fixed points in a child's daily life, like dinnertime, and bedtime, and study-time, and playtime, or a parent at the breakfast table each morning or waiting at the bus stop when he comes home from school, a child can't trust and learn and grow. But neither can an adult!

Why do we pray? Why do we have devotions? Why do we read our Bible every day? Could it have something to do with spiritual order and discipline? What are your natural and spiritual disciplines for each day?

God creates order out of chaos on the first day of Creation. If your life is in chaos today, God can still create order in your life and help you to get your balance in life. Then He creates light to balance the darkness. Then He creates time by establishing a predictable progression from darkness to light and from evening to morning. And the simple fact that Earth rotates regularly on its axis and there will be a dawn after every midnight gives order and stability to our physical and spiritual existence.

Every child frightened of the dark clings to the predictable truth that Light will come again in the morning! It's a timeless truth that every child of God can cling to when facing a time of spiritual darkness. How many of you know the dawn will come? The light will shine again. You can count on it.

There is a God who renews His Creation every day. He is the One who said: Let there be light, and there was light! The affirmation of goodness will be repeated six times in Chapter One, and it comes at the end of every creative day. Light emerges as a source of both joy and truth. It is what nourishes the plants and animals and defines the shapes and colors of the universe.

Light is what encourages and inspires the human spirit. And guess what! Jesus said, "I am the light of the world!" It is the light of Christ that illuminates truth as it banishes the darkness of ignorance.

I think it's significant that the Creation of light precedes the Creation of the sun. That sure defies the sun worship of the pagan cults. Genesis teaches us to revere the God who created the light, not the sun. The goodness of light reminds us that our world was created by design, not by random accident. The world is not a by-product of two gods making war or making love. It is not a coincidence connected to some slime amoeba. Our world is an act of one awesome God who conceived and created a good place for us to live in and who finds joy and satisfaction in the fact that we live here!

In Genesis 1, the entire Creation is filled with hope and optimism. Even if your parents didn't plan for your arrival here on the planet, how many of you know God did? You are not an accident! God planned all along for you to be here! For us to love and believe in ourselves, we all need the feeling of having been wanted and planned by those who created us! The Creation of human life is God's most deliberate and "hands-on" act.

Conclusion

God is a God of Order and Discipline. God's created everything perfectly in the universe and has remained in perfect order for millenniums. The earth rotates in perfect time, minute by minute, day by day, year after year, century after century, for untold thousands of years, even millions of years, according to many scientists and professors. We can set our clocks and know exactly, to the minute, when the sun will rise and when it will set. We've been doing this for centuries now, and the earth's rotation never winds down nor alters its' time in any way.

If someone asks, "Which is correct, science or the Bible?" the answer is, "There is no contradiction between science and the Bible." The contradiction is between scientific *theories* and the Bible. Anything in science that is truly a proven scientific fact fully agrees with the Bible. The whole scientific world exhibits overwhelming evidence of a Creator.

All creation screams, "God is real. He's alive and well and is orchestrating the events of the universe. God is a God of order. From the magnificence of outer space to the incredible detail of the smallest things in nature, all creation flows as God intended.

This magnificent Creative God can take the chaos and confusion in your life and create a life of order and discipline that leaves you incredibly fulfilled and full of hope and joy for your eternal future. All you have to do is say yes to God's creative work within you!