

Genesis

THEME: God desires to relate to his creation on an intimate level.

AUTHOR: Genesis doesn't identify its author, but Scripture and church tradition ascribe authorship to Moses.

DATE OF WRITING: Genesis was probably written between 1446 and 1406 BC.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM GENESIS: "Do not be afraid . . . I am your shield, your very great reward" (Genesis 15:1).

CHALLENGE FROM GENESIS: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).

REFLECTION FROM GENESIS: "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14).

Genesis is a book of beginnings that sets the stage for all of history. In Genesis we're invited to witness the creation of the world. We get to see the world that God created and pronounced "good." Adam and Eve were able to speak freely with God, to enjoy an intimate, open, honest relationship with him — until sin entered the picture. The book of Genesis sets the scene for the rest of the Bible, for the ongoing story of a loving God who wants to reinstate a relationship with the creatures he created in his image.

Part of our recovery is our acceptance of this world as it currently is: fallen, broken and sinful. Yet when we put our faith in Christ, things begin to get better. In Genesis we face the realities of this world and the origins of the hardships we endure. Even more importantly, in Genesis we discover God's plan to bring blessing to all humankind through the seed of Abraham.

The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was eve-

ning, and there was morning — the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry ground "land,"

and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening, and there was morning — the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” ²³And there was evening, and there was morning — the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the land produce

living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^a and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

²⁹Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

²By the seventh day God had finished

^a 26 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth*

the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve

⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth^a and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, ⁶but streams^b came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God formed a man^c from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

⁸Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^d and onyx are also there.) ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.^e ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from

any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

¹⁸The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam^f no suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs^g and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^h he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the

^a 5 Or *land*; also in verse 6 ^b 6 Or *mist* ^c 7 The Hebrew for *man* (*adam*) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for *ground* (*adamah*); it is also the name *Adam* (see verse 20). ^d 12 Or *good*; *pearls* ^e 13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia ^f 20 Or *the man* ^g 21 Or *took part of the man’s side* ^h 22 Or *part*



MY NAME IS EVE

GENESIS 3:1–7

Understanding recovery begins with understanding our fundamental problem: Our sin separates us from God and the blessings he wants us to enjoy. Sin's story begins with the temptation of Eve by Satan, in the guise of a serpent. Even under the perfect conditions found in the Garden of Eden, temptation found Eve. The devil's strategy was to lead the first woman to distort the word of God (see Genesis 3:1–3) and to doubt his goodness (see vv. 4–6). Eve twisted God's words by adding to them and thereby misrepresenting his directive (see v. 3). Further, God's goodness was attacked by the serpent's assertion that Eve's sin wouldn't result in death (see v. 4), as well as Satan disparaging God's motives in his directions to Adam and Eve (see v. 5). God, the enemy insinuated, was holding out on the world's first couple. Eve bought into this last lie: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it" (v. 6). Eve's sin spread almost immediately to the only other person on the planet, her husband. She took some of the fruit to Adam and he also ate.

At this point in the story, we see that some of the serpent's predictions did indeed prove to be true. Satan had informed Eve that "when you eat . . . your eyes will be opened" (v. 5) and that these first two humans would have personal experience with both good and evil. The promise of the serpent, though, was that this would make them "like God" (v. 5). The great irony of this deception was that both Adam and Eve were already "like God," having been created in his own image (see 1:26–27). Their eyes were now opened, and they did in fact know both good and evil, but the outcome of this experience was shame (see v. 7).

This is the tragic beginning of sin's deadly, destructive work. Lives continue to be devastated as God's words are distorted and his goodness is doubted. The consequences of sin, as well as God's plans for humanity's recovery, are spelled out already in Adam and Eve's story.

garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7Then the eyes of both

of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

1
2
3

1
2
3

DENIAL LESSON [*Principle One*]

For the previous entry in the DENIAL lesson, go to Psalm 107:13 – 14 (page 708).

For a discussion of Principles One through Eight and a listing of their related lessons, go to pages xvii – xlv.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

GENESIS 3:7–8

The power to change comes only through God’s grace. Principle One states: “Realize I’m not God. I admit that I’m powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life has become unmanageable.” If we admit that we’re powerless, we recognize our need for a power greater than ourselves to restore us. That power is our Higher Power, the one and only true Higher Power, Jesus Christ.

In Principle One we discover that we’ve been in DENIAL of our habits. The next letter in DENIAL is *I*. Denial ISOLATES US FROM GOD. Adam and Eve are an unforgettable example of how secrets and denial separate us from true fellowship with God. After they sinned, the first couple’s secret alienated them from God. Genesis 3:7 tells us how they tried to isolate themselves from God because they were naked and felt ashamed. In verse 12 Adam tried to rationalize his sin. First he attempted to transfer the responsibility to God: “The woman you put here with me . . .” Then he tried to push the blame onto Eve: “. . . she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

But God’s light shines on the truth, even while our denial keeps us in the darkness of isolation: “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:6–7).

The next letter in DENIAL is *A*. Go to Ephesians 4:25 (page 1467).

My Name Is Regina

I'M A BELIEVER WHO STRUGGLES WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND ANOREXIA

Please read about Eve's deception by the serpent (Satan) in Genesis 3:1 – 7.

During my first eight years of life, my family would have been considered perfect by most observers. As the daughter of a pastor and a stay-at-home mother, I lived in a nearly idyllic setting. But my world was dramatically changed when my mother was diagnosed with cancer. When she came home from the hospital, I was allowed only to gaze at her through her bedroom door. I began to think I had only myself to rely on.

My mom survived, but the remainder of my childhood was characterized by regular moves. I wasn't good at making friends. At summer camp when I was 12 years old, I smoked marijuana for the first time. My monthly habit gradually became daily, after which I discovered other drugs. Like Eve, I falsely viewed these substances as "good . . . pleasing . . . and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Genesis 3:6). I felt good when I was high and saw myself as fitting in better, with a heightened openness to new insights and understanding.

The difficulty was that I was a Christian; ironically, as my addiction grew, so did my love for God. I served on leadership teams at church, taught Bible studies and mentored other young women in their walks with the Lord. Yet no matter how deeply I delved into God's Word, the temptations never eased up.

I began a career in veterinary medicine, and one morning I assisted in putting an old, cancer-ridden dog to sleep. Her name was Amazing Grace. Intrigued, I asked the presiding vet how the name had been chosen. The doctor smiled and replied, "I've been repeating the same thing to her owners for years: 'She's a dud. You shouldn't have kept her. The price you'll spend on her won't be worth the time you have with her.' The dog's owners only looked at me and asked, 'What if God had said that about us?'" One more seed of the greatness of God's love was planted that day in my heart.

My pastor began talking about a mission trip, but God made it clear that I couldn't simultaneously be a missionary and a drug addict. I did go to Romania and Hungary, and a passion for reaching the world grew in my heart. Still, temptation was never far away, and within one month of returning home I was back into my addiction. Why, once again, was I using drugs

after God had so clearly intervened? I went to my pastor for help. His answer: Pray and read the Bible more. I tried, but I turned back to my habit.

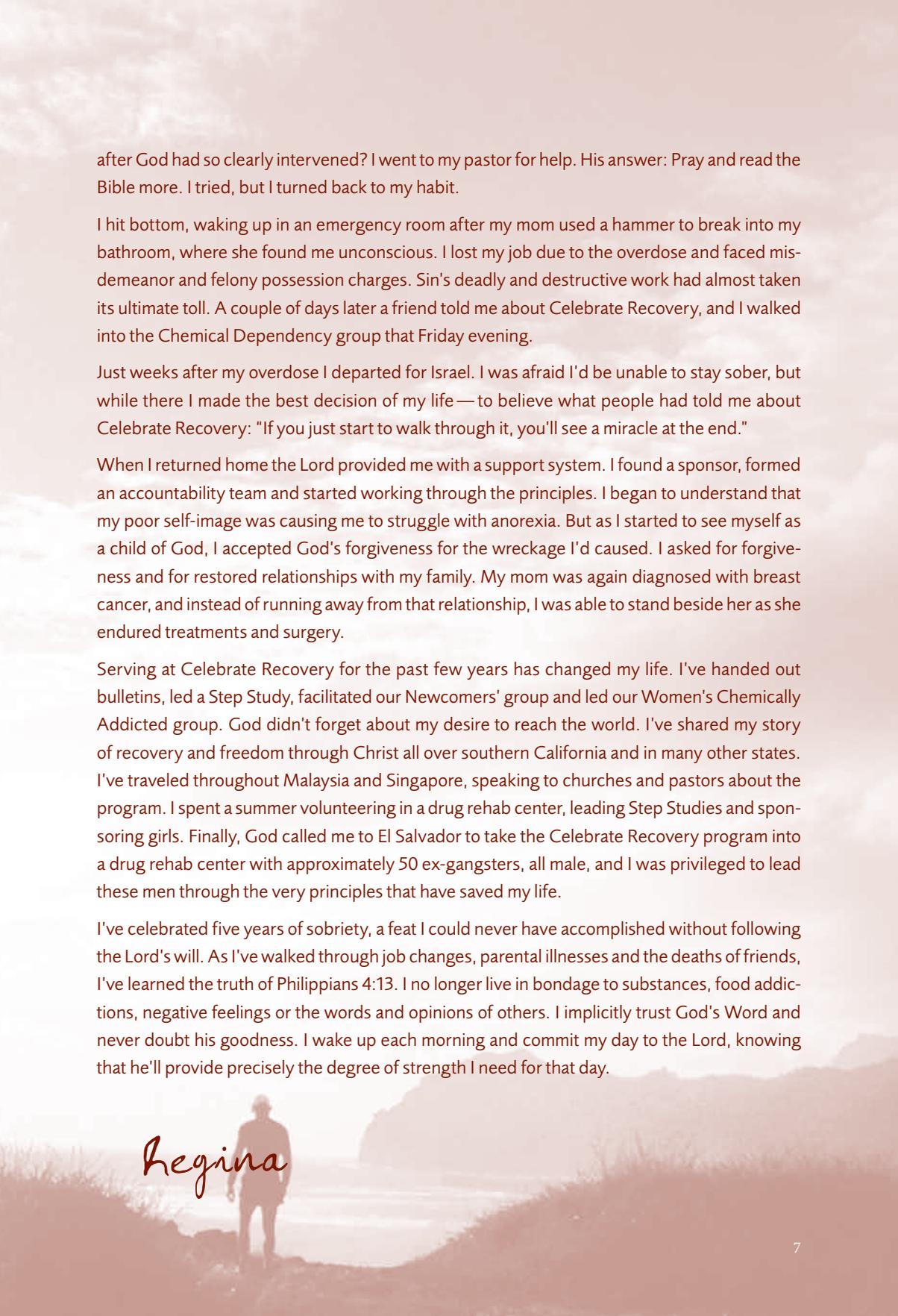
I hit bottom, waking up in an emergency room after my mom used a hammer to break into my bathroom, where she found me unconscious. I lost my job due to the overdose and faced misdemeanor and felony possession charges. Sin's deadly and destructive work had almost taken its ultimate toll. A couple of days later a friend told me about Celebrate Recovery, and I walked into the Chemical Dependency group that Friday evening.

Just weeks after my overdose I departed for Israel. I was afraid I'd be unable to stay sober, but while there I made the best decision of my life — to believe what people had told me about Celebrate Recovery: "If you just start to walk through it, you'll see a miracle at the end."

When I returned home the Lord provided me with a support system. I found a sponsor, formed an accountability team and started working through the principles. I began to understand that my poor self-image was causing me to struggle with anorexia. But as I started to see myself as a child of God, I accepted God's forgiveness for the wreckage I'd caused. I asked for forgiveness and for restored relationships with my family. My mom was again diagnosed with breast cancer, and instead of running away from that relationship, I was able to stand beside her as she endured treatments and surgery.

Serving at Celebrate Recovery for the past few years has changed my life. I've handed out bulletins, led a Step Study, facilitated our Newcomers' group and led our Women's Chemically Addicted group. God didn't forget about my desire to reach the world. I've shared my story of recovery and freedom through Christ all over southern California and in many other states. I've traveled throughout Malaysia and Singapore, speaking to churches and pastors about the program. I spent a summer volunteering in a drug rehab center, leading Step Studies and sponsoring girls. Finally, God called me to El Salvador to take the Celebrate Recovery program into a drug rehab center with approximately 50 ex-gangsters, all male, and I was privileged to lead these men through the very principles that have saved my life.

I've celebrated five years of sobriety, a feat I could never have accomplished without following the Lord's will. As I've walked through job changes, parental illnesses and the deaths of friends, I've learned the truth of Philippians 4:13. I no longer live in bondage to substances, food addictions, negative feelings or the words and opinions of others. I implicitly trust God's Word and never doubt his goodness. I wake up each morning and commit my day to the Lord, knowing that he'll provide precisely the degree of strength I need for that day.



Regina