

Institute for Christian Teaching
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BACK TO GENESIS:
LEARNING AND LIVING
ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

In Genesis prospective, the original record of God's visible creation is both simple and complex. Simple, as far as God's powerful words behind the creation (fiat), and complex, in the way the creatures are. The purpose and spirit behind God's creation can provide clear and correct view to any one who earnestly desire for it. Genesis may be defined as the story of mankind which is disclosed by the infinite divine power to the finite mankind, "The story which makes the point of departure of human civilization."

The questions, "why am I here?" "Whom am I?" "What is my destiny?", are pointing back to the story of Genesis. One can not achieve sizeable satisfaction unless he/she confronts with the spirit of Genesis. It pervades the totality of human existence and extends the purpose and meaning to one's life.

Today's classrooms are not exempted from the Genesis facts. Modernization cannot attain its success unless it presents the records of Genesis. Therefore, it is essential to present the story of Genesis to the young minds who are at the threshold of maturity.

I THE GENESIS PERSPECTIVE

The clear exposition of God's plan for the mankind is revealed in Genesis. The attempt here is to understand the original plan of God in its right perspective and to assimilate in to our classroom deliberations.

Simple or complex, existence has a beginning or point of departure. The beginning is the main attribute to any form of existence. No one can think of anything that which do not have a beginning. The concept beginning is the underlining principle of the existential world. The beginning is as essential as the end, to determine the point of effect and achievement of life. The beginning may be the point of measurement for the end there life

takes its due course of action and reaction. The concept the beginning give the scope to assess the future. Therefore, the concept "the beginning" is a binding and indispensable force to the world of existence.

Before all beginning God

In His Being God is self-existing. While His creation is dependent on Himself, He is utterly independent of the creation. He not only has life, but he is life to His universe, and has the source of that life within Himself.

Very early in Biblical history, this mystery of God's Being was revealed to Moses. In the wilderness of Horab, he met with God as fire in a bush (Exo. 3:2). The distinctive thing about that phenomenon was that the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. To Moses, this must have meant that the fire was independent of its environment: It was self-fed. Such is God in His essential Being. He is utterly independent of every environment in which He wills to make Himself known. This quality of God's Being, probably finds expression in His personal name Yahweh and in His self-affirmation: "I AM WHO I AM," that is, I am the one who has being within Himself. (Exo. 3:14) He is the beginning for all other beginning, yet without a beginning for Himself. Christ gave this mystery in its clearest expression when He said: "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the son to have life in itself (Jn. 5:26). This makes independence of a life, a distinctive quality of deity. God is revealed as the fountain head of all there is, animate and inanimate, the creator of life giver, who alone has life within Himself.

God the Creator

Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvelous adaption to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creation. The sunshine and the rain, that gladdens and refreshes the earth, the hills and the oceans all speak of the creator and His motive.

To every one of us, comes at times, a longing to know more of

the creator. Such a longing can be satisfied by understanding of the important principles involved in the relation between the creator and the creature. The creatures are created and placed to represent the sovereignty of God. As the creature came forth from the hands of God they were to abide and fulfil the purpose of the creator.

The question of creation to the creator is purely out of necessity. If it is not so, there would have no meaning in the existence of this universe. The universe is the ground reality in which we see God's creativity revealed ultimately for a purpose and such purpose adds to meaning. The creator did not lay the foundation for the universe without a necessity and meaning; He visualized a utility and scope. At the same time, He imparted the finite status of creativity to His creatures to create (procreate) His own kind. The creature becomes more meaningful when they reflect the creativity of God in their experience. The entire life of creature should be the one that reproduce and reflect the creator's view by maintaining perpetual relation with Him. The creator is a perfect one who is willing to share maximum creative perfection with his creature provided the creature co-operate in the process of a close relation. The creator does not leave the creature in chaos. The loyalty of the creature determines the scope and continuity of relation with the creator.

God the Sharer

The spirit of creation is found in the perfect sharing attitude of God's. In fact, it was an act of sharing of God's plan to make a new chapter in the history of the universe. Particularly in the creation of man. God did His best in sharing what He had. The very format of God was transferred to man. Here, we find the synthesis of "form and the content" that attributed for the best kind of existence. Man became the best of all creation. He was sharing God's form (image) had His creativity (rationality, intelligence) in a higher level, than that of the other beings. Man's form and content given by God made Him very distinct, outstanding, and powerful among all other creatures, at last, man

established an authority over all the other beings of the earth. Yet his authority was not to hinder the principles of God who only is Just and Right always. When man's authority above the other creatures come in conflict, the existence runs in the crisis. Epidemics, natural calamities and disaster give witness to it. The creator ordained a harmony in the whole process of creation. The same spirit of harmony He wants the man to maintain in the world when he rules over the affairs of it. The carelessness in man's dealings are moment by moment accounted and he has to pay for it. For God is particular and accurate in all His affairs, and violation of God's plan will bring eternal adverse effect on mankind.

God the Teacher

As God was very apt in His creation, which indicates that man should formulate such a character and behave as a reflected model. God wants man to safeguard all the norms and rules that His guidance and motivation will be made available always as a mark of acceptance. He taught the best lesson to follow in day to day life to resemble the model of God, and ultimately to attain the likeness of God. He taught man to have a harmony with the will of God that he will be capable of comprehending divine things. Man is expected of holy and happy; bearing the image of God in perfect obedience. God taught the lesson "relationship" in the class room of Garden of Eden. Even after the fall, He has not abounded mankind from the teaching circumference. He still gives out the highest ideal for the reformation and restoration of the lost glory of mankind. God was the best and intimate teacher who can be the ideal example, and who evolves the minds of students and shares the knowledge of life and death in totality. Eternity was the destiny of God's curriculum; and obedience was the essence of learning. The wisdom of God was efficient for all understanding in the life of man. God was such a benevolent teacher who laboured restlessly for the welfare of man prior and after the fall. For the full development of character of His students, God planned them under the laws those were the indispensable conditions of existence. Without freedom of

choice man's obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced, which will be contradictory to an intelligent and rational mind. God appointed labour as a blessing to man to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and develop his faculties. In mental and physical activities the first students (Adam and Eve) found one of the highest pleasures of their holy existence. The first pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but student's receiving instruction from the All-wise creator.

Man the Sinner

Sin originated in the universe before the creation of man when an angelic being, Lucifer, deliberately chose to become Satan, the adversary to God. He incited Eve and Adam to rebel against a specific divine command designed to symbolize the sovereignty of the creator.

Why sin permitted? Such a question to be encountered comprehensively that no misunderstanding or inconnection can have any place in the human mind.

God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible consequence. It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. The tempter intimated that the divine warning was not to be actually fulfilled, it was designed merely to intimidate them. He is constantly seeking to excite a spirit of irrelevant curiosity, a restless, inquisitive desire to penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom and power. Satan with his self-motive, tempts man to disobedience by leading them to believe that they are entering into a wonderful field of knowledge. But this was all a deception. (Best possible example for today is TV and its over penetrating effect upon minds). Their idea of progression finally became a trapping upon God's requirement, setting the feet in the path that leads to degradation and death. Thus, sin became the cause as well as effect of man's destiny.

God the Redeemer

Redemption means by the definition deliverance from some evil by payment or a price. It is more than a simple deliverance. Thus

prisoners of war might be released on payment of a price which was called a 'ransom'. In such a case, the prisoner may be described as a new man who seeks, finds and follows the new master (God) on his own choice. There is no oppressive measure or enforcing act but a willful relation by which they exist coherently. Such a ~~deal~~ helps the to grow mutually and never became a burden or stumbling any more. A new approach, a new view, and a new creativity in the spirit of co-relation.

A divine intervention which makes the natural man redemptive to God's word in a saving manner. When this has occurred, the word of God brings the new life into expression. It is clear, a new birth is conceived comprehensively, where God brings man to conscious faith in Christ. Regenerating grace comes direct by the spirit to lost sinners. The word of God brings it in to expression in faith and repentance.

The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. God was to manifest in Christ in order to save man in his helpless condition, (2 Cor. 5:19) to come in to harmony with God once again. Thus, by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen man might once more become "sons of God." It was the marvel of all the universe that Christ should humble Himself to save fallen man. And as Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, "It is finished" which was a shout of triumph sang through every world even through heaven itself.

II LIVING FROM THE GENESIS PERSPECTIVE

It is a sin to be sick, for all sickness is the result of transgression. Men and women should inform themselves in regard to the philosophy of actual healthful living. The minds of rational being today seem endorsed in wrong priorities and have trusted their bodies with the modern science. Many seem to think they have right to treat own lives as they please but forget that they are not on their own. Every needless violation of the laws which God has established in our being is virtually a violation of the laws of nature. The creator, who formed the body, has a claim on them that they should not be misused. A misuse of the body shortens

that period of time which God designs to be used in His service (I Cor. 6:3). Those who shorten their lives by disregarding natural laws are guilty of robbery toward God.

Purposive Living

Life is a gift of God. Our body has been given us to use in God's service; and He expects that we care for then also appreciate them. Our impulses and passions have their origin in our body. We are of the combination of physical as well as mental faculties. Our body must be kept in the best possible condition physically and spiritually that we may have the best use of our talents. Virtue of character and the purpose of life depends upon the right action of the powers of the mind and body.

Our artificial civilization is encouraging evils by destroying sound principles. Customs and fashion are at war with nature. The practice that mankind engaged in are drastically reducing physical and mental strength, and bringing upon the race an intolerable burden. Evidence for such disharmony we find around in crime, disease, and wretchedness everywhere. The decline in the physical and mental vigour is common and the power of endurance is being diminished. Thus world becomes a cursed place.

Epistelist John prescribes the secret of harmony which is inevitable in life, "a healthy body and soul" (3 John 1:2), in a balanced view.

Healthy Living

The plan of life which God appointed for the first parents has a lesson for us. Although sin has cast its shadow over the earth, God desires His children find delight in the works of His hands. The more closely His plan of life is followed, the more wonderfully He will restore the sufferings humanity.

Educating health principles are of a greater need now, than ever before. Wrong habits of eating, and the use of unhealthful food are responsible in a great degree for the crime and intemperance that curse the world. Health reform is the only means for lessening suffering in the world; try and show that abstinence from all hurtful food and drink is the fruit of true and genuine

living. God is trying to lead us back to His original design that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth.

Vegetables, fruits, and grains should constitute our diet. Eating flesh food is unnatural and unintended. How can man take the life of God's creatures that they may consume the flesh as luxury? We are to return to God's original purpose in the creation of man. Ill health in various forms affect the body and has a corresponding effect on the mind and soul. Those who indulge in meat eating, tea, drinking, and overeating are sowing the seeds for a harvest of pain and death. Many times when meat is eaten, it decays in stomach, and creates diseases. Cancer, tumors, pulmonary disease along with many other modern civilizational diseases are largely caused by flesh food.

Revolutionize common manner of living, eating, and drinking and we will have a happier and healthier people. Food was the means through which the tempter captured the mind of Eve; food was the issue among the Israelites caused a tendency to murmur and rebel against Moses. Food became the means of temptation down through the ages; therefore, 'what you eat is what you are.'

Prayerful Living

God has power to give His divine grace and strengthen man in his infirmities to overcome. Christ in His earthly ministry achieved a victory in behalf of human race. We should draw near God, humble ourselves before Him by putting away everything that prevent to have holiness of character through prayer and supplication.

Daniel's example establish the Biblical stand point in dealing with extreme situations such as ours today. He did not dare to trust his own moral power. Prayer was to him a necessity. he made God his strength and fear of God was continually before him in all transactions of his life.

Daniel's character is presented for the whole world as a striking example of what God's original plan meant for everyone who seeks for it.

God-Dependent Living

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education. It is the only safeguard against temptation and make us like God in character. This knowledge is needed for uplifting, serving the fellowmen. This knowledge for depending upon God is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. Jesus said "This is eternal life"-that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" John 17:3.

The mighty power that works through all nature and sustain all things reveals the independent nature of God, yet willing to share with those who depend on Him. In God we live and move and have our being. The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, breathing lungs, nerves and muscles in the living origin are kept in order and function by the power of God. This is the knowledge which God is inviting us to receive and depend on.

III IMPLICATION OF GENESIS PRINCIPLES FOR EDUCATION

How do we go about the class room activities in modern days. When the minds can relate reflectively to only those exiting realities how do we presents the eternal and judgmental truths to students whose minds setting is of the worldly standard? These questions have to be dealt according to its relevance. The original plan set by the creator has all inclusive answer for all ages.

1. Creativity

The conceptual understanding of human creativity may be understood in its right perspective. As the dignity of human life exists on the creativity, such creativity is relative not absolute in human life experience. Each individual varies on the level of creativity for each one possesses wisdom and understanding relatively. This promotes the ideas that human creativity is a dependant and borrowed factor. Ultimate creativity is found only with the creator who is absolute in all walks of existence. Process of education must be the human attempt to share such divine creativity which will enhance the life to be meaningful.

Class Exercise:- Modelling, art work and craft may be conducted to high-light creativity in man. Also cite examples of animals having creativity in their lives such as ants, sparrows for the survival sake.

2. Equality and Unity

The sense of belonging in common among the creatures. All organism have such an amazing character. Among the creatures, man is an exception, that he rises above from the level that of animals. His sense of equality and unity is emerged from the rationality unlike the other kinds of organism which are led by instinct. The secret for such a unity and equality merged into the nature of man because of God's reflection of His image at the point of creation. Man was created in exception that God put in him the likeness of the divine form, hence the sense of unity present in His nature and in character, even in diversity. There are many dividing forces which seem overfull enough to disintegrate the unity and equality of mankind; but they will never triumph for the divine plan and design can not be altered. Barriers of disunity on the basis of color, creed, caste, or ethnic orientation should no way hinder the plan of the creator. It is unwise to propagate such a devise for they will be the enemies of God.

Class Exercise:- Class discussion on "Tower of Babel" to emphasis the experiences of disunity, to show the effect of man-power achieved through disregarding divine part in it. Also the experience of Abraham, Joseph; and the examples from the world of socialism also may be used.

3. Dignity and Value of Human Being

Man is considered outstanding in the hand of creator due to his dignity and value possessing capacity. By sharing God's wisdom and power he was elevated in status as a moral being that made him to have a very distinctive purpose in existence. He is able to assess the values and set the standard of life unlike all other creature. He is the only created being who can transcend by learning and living in order to attain his destiny. The power of choice and the sense of freedom that lead to responsibility enhance

man to be a dignified and value conscious being.

Class Exercise:- Call for a dialogue on values of life and its relation with dignity of man. Example can be cited from within the Bible and outside. God's plan for the formation of Laws to safeguard values compare them with laws such as traffic law, tax law, physical laws, and emphasize that laws operate on the values and dignity of man.

4. God-Man Relationship

The purpose of human life will never fulfill unless he realizes the safeguarding principle of God-Man relation. This is to be viewed as the two sides of a single system. One can not exist without the other; or one can not be overlooked while other is considered. In life, at a time, there may be point of saturation and frustration but the secret of God-man relationship cannot be kept out of life experience. It is a principle which will never expire as long as the universe exist; an eternal and unceasing principle ordained by God. That supports "Loving God as well as man is the golden rule of existence."

Class Exercise:- Illustrate the interdependence found between beings, and height-light 'trust' as key to any relationship. Carbon cycle, oxygen cycle and other natural phenomena that emphasize relation can be used as examples, and conclude that proper growth and progress attained only through healthy relations in any society, nation and the world at large.

5. Family Value

Modern civilization has adulterated the heavenly plans and the family that was supposed to be the mini-heaven on earth has turned as battle ground. Family value is not more a matter of concern in the modern world. Over influence of humanism and pleasure (Hedonism) seeking attitude of modern man forget the relevance of divinely constituted family system, thus lost the right idea on relationship.

Extension of values, and value consciousness are the contribution of an ideal home to the society. Failure and success of any society may be measured on the basis of the values it

entertain. Home is the birth place where each members learn the basic values such as love, trust, and self-control. Mother is the first teacher who expects to impart basic values. The family binding which is so essential is the result of upholding values, and God being the center of it. It is a divinely ordained institution where no one is kept outside. Every values and its exercise in the family must point to God, and accomplish God's purpose on this earth for God is the author of values system and He is the highest good.

Family (Home) is the place where caring and sharing become prime concern. In sorrow or joy, sharing is the aim in a Godly family.

Class Exercise:- Engage in a discussion on polygamy, divorce, sex and its proper use, marriage and other relevant family related issues; and emphasis on the sound Biblical view as a binding on man for the happiness. Also, the high-light the examples of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel in order to show the adverse effect if any one rejects the God's blueprint of family.

6. Balanced Lifestyle

Modern life-style has brought about a large number of ailments to the mankind. Modern man is become pray to extreme pleasures as a result he lost the original passion to identify the blessings of nature. His life became complex and complicated. Simplicity in behaviour and practice has been lost. Food become a means of curse to his bodily nourishment instead of a blessing as it was intended originally. He lost his sense of priority on food, and disillusioned in discerning good and bad and natural and unnatural. Taste of tongue betrayed his integrity and basic objectives. Thus stomach is God to him. Passion for modern tastes driven him away from the realities of life. The caution what shall we eat? is no more relevant.

Our body is a wonderful piece of machine which needs special care and nurturing. Food is meant not only for the physical requirement but also for the mental development. Keeping a strict balance between physical and mental growth is the basic lesson in

the practice of balanced lifestyle. The design of our body by a wonderful designer should give us a proper idea for the right intake. In learning process one should have enough knowledge on the right life style, and ignorance of it will destroy the very life. Pure air, sunlight, simple and natural diet, exercise, practice of temperate living are the divinely oriented facts that everyone should know about.

Class Exercise:-

1. Making of a chart to show the balance diet and calorie count.
2. Simple working demonstration on cooking.
3. Categorizing the originally planned food and modern food, to draw a meaningful conclusion of its effect on the body, and insist on the view that vegetarian is the best dietary plan of God.

CONCLUSION

The life at our hand is precious and can not be measured and compared with any matter of this earth. Matter is a by-product of our mind or subsistant reality, while the life a gift given to us for a greater purpose than that of matter itself. Driving force of our life is in the unseen hand of God, while the matter is a dependent entity to the mind. Matter is transferred and changed as per the necessity by the visible hand of man; while life is controlled and transformed by the invisible hand of God. Seeking after the valuable secrets of life original, is the greatest lesson one should learn and such a discovery will ensure satisfaction and joy of living.

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