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## Day 1

**Learn:** Prayerfully read Genesis 2.4-17. Hebrew had a word [פֶּרֶץ = par-DASE] which meant “enclosure,” but our concept of paradise comes from the Greek παράδεισος [pah-RAH-day-sus], which meant “garden.” When the Jews translated the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek, they called the Garden of Eden, “Paradise.” We are not sure what the name “Eden” means, but the best guess is that it comes from the root meaning “pleasure” or “delight.” Even with the information about the rivers, we cannot know for sure where Eden was. Pishon, Havilah, Gihon, and Cush are all obscure in reference, either referring to multiple places or not appearing at all in ancient literature. The Tigris and Euphrates suggest the garden was in what is now Turkey, where these rivers begin, but we do not know whether the course of these rivers was changed during the flood of Noah, which occurred between the time of Adam and the time of Moses [when all this was written down].

2.4-6 show this is an elaboration on what we learned in 1.1-2.3. It is not a second version, just an elaboration to bring out some important information from a different perspective. Notice the “God” of creation is now referred to as “LORD God” in English, Yahweh God is the idea in Hebrew. God gave himself the name of Yahweh and identified himself as such to Moses and the others whom God delivered out of Egypt in the Exodus. This passage connected for them Yahweh their deliverer and God the creator. Notice God has not created a woman yet; we are looking at God’s relationship with Adam on the first day of Adam’s life.

**Reflect:** Notice that God gave Adam work to do, even in the Eden Paradise, even though this is before the fall into sin and the curse. Does that surprise you or go against your concept of work? Why do many people crave leisure and hate work? Do you think it was God’s design that people work so they could have leisure or that people have some leisure so they could do better work?

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## Day 2

**Learn:** Ever wonder about the historicity of the biblical account of the first people? The apostle Paul verified that Adam was the first person created by God [1 Corinthians 15.45] and Jesus verified the historicity of Adam and Eve coming together in marriage [Matthew 19.5]. God gave the first person a natural body for his natural existence on the Earth. Many cults and religions argue that our body is sinful while our soul is pure, but Adam had a pure physical body [and as we will see later in the story, we now have corruption in our souls].

Prayerfully read Genesis 2.4-17; Isaiah 64.8. The garden was part of God’s provision and empowerment: the perfect environment for people to thrive as God’s representatives. 2.10-14 emphasizes God’s blessing and provision, with an ample supply of water for plants, animals, and people. In 2.16-17, we see that God gave Adam ample provision and permission: he could eat from any tree in the garden except one. So Adam had great freedom and blessing, and only one prohibition. 2.7-9 reminds us that we have to remain humble toward God, for he is the eternal creator, and we are not only creatures, we are creatures which came from dust. In Genesis 1, we saw an emphasis on God giving us authority in his name, but now we see an emphasis on recognizing that we are never on God’s level or even independent of him. In 2.7, there is a poetic wordplay in Hebrew, called assonance: God formed the first “man” [which sounds like “Adam” in Hebrew] from the dust of the “ground” [which sounds like “Adam” with an “ah” at the end].

**Reflect:** In what ways do people act arrogantly? Can you think of any ways we might subtly act like we were independent of God or in control of ourselves, even if we do not mean disrespect toward God? Like children who want to control what little they can, all of us tend to think and act in our own reasoning and power, but what is the problem with that according to the above thoughts?

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## Day 3

**Learn:** Prayerfully read Genesis 2.15-17. “The knowledge of good and evil” is an Old Testament idiom, referring to formulating a judicial decision. This tree would awaken in people the desire and ability to decide morally what they

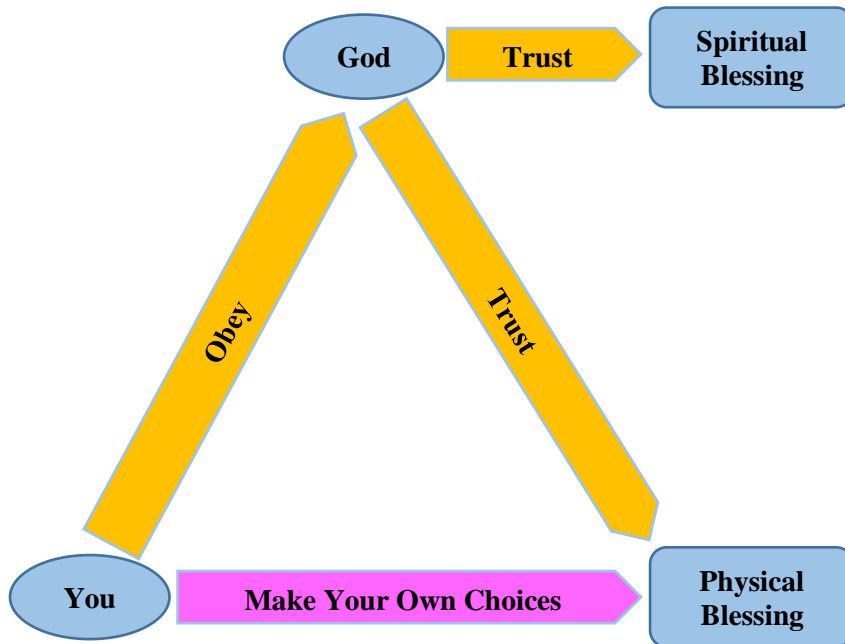
should do. The problem with this was that such decisions were God's prerogative. Adam was supposed to trust and obey God, do what God commanded and trust God with everything else, depend on God and submit to God.

**Reflect:** Read Matthew 6.31-33. Can you see Jesus said essentially the same thing? Jesus said to trust God for what we need while focusing on living as God's image bearers, pursuing God's righteousness and kingdom. Why is it hard sometimes to trust that God will meet all your needs? Why is it harder to trust God will give you what you want?

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#### Day 4

**Learn:** The Top-Line / Bottom-Line graphic depicts Adam's choice: he could take the bottom-line of making his own



choices, relying on his own skills, and living by his own reasoning; or he could take the top-line of walking with God, trusting God for what he wanted and obeying God's instructions, and living by God's revelation.

If we do not trust and obey God, if we do not walk by God's revelation, then we cannot live as God's image bearers: we will not reflect God's character, represent God, reproduce God's image, or rule as God's stewards over the resources he has entrusted to us. In effect, we will be following the example of Satan instead of the example of Christ. Thus it is important that we always take the top-line approach, no matter what it costs us.

**Reflect:** Why is the impulse to do things

our own way so strong? Why is it tempting to rely on our own or our culture's ideas instead of Scripture? Why is it so hard to "wait" on God that we tend to cut corners to get what we want? How important are worldly "physical" blessings to you? Can you see any choices you have made in life that suggest you have sometimes put those blessings ahead of attaining spiritual blessings, or ahead of God's will?

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#### Day 5

**Learn:** If you live on the top-line, you will get the physical blessings which God wants you to have. Even more importantly, you will experience spiritual blessings, such as the following:

1. You will obtain God's help to endure your trials.
2. You will grow stronger in faith, instead of weaker as you would on the bottom line.
3. You will grow more spiritually mature, preparing you to handle life and to do God's work.
4. You will enjoy uninterrupted intimacy with God.
5. You will experience a greater manifestation of the Fruit of the Spirit.
6. Your example of walking in faith and obedience will be inspiring to others in the church and to non-believers.
7. You will earn treasure in heaven, treasure you can enjoy forever.
8. You will grow more enlightened about God and to be more Christ-like yourself.
9. You will become a better follower of Christ, since he modeled obedience and dependence on God and taught obedience and dependence to his disciples.
10. You will begin to understand how God looks at life and at you, which will help you make sense of what is happening in your life, which in turn will help you to rest in your hope in Christ.

**Reflect:** Would you like to experience any of the above more fully? In what areas of your life could you do better at taking the top-line all the time? How determined are you to follow Christ, walk with God, be led by the Bible and the Spirit in *all* things *all* the time? Are you willing to accept accountability from others in this church?