

Genesis 2:4-17_Boundaries of Blessing: Flourishing within God's Design.

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In The Beginning / Genesis 2:4–17

For four weeks now we've been watching God build.

We've seen His eternity. His power. His intentionality. His rest.

And if you've been with us through this series — you know that [Genesis 1](#) reads like a wide-angle shot.

God speaks — and worlds appear. God separates — and order takes shape. God fills — and life explodes.

It's majestic. It's breathtaking. But it's from a distance.

Today — Moses takes us behind the curtain.

[Genesis 2](#) is the close-up.

Not a different story from [Genesis 1](#). The same story — told from the inside.

And what you're about to see will change how you understand your life, your work, and your relationship with God.

Because in this text — God doesn't speak from heaven.

He kneels.

He gets His hands in the dirt.

And what He does next — how He makes us, where He puts us, what He tells us —

reveals something about His heart for you that you cannot afford to miss.

But He also does something that most people misunderstand.

He draws a line.

Here's the truth that governs everything we walk through today:

When we live within God's boundaries — we walk in His protection. We enjoy His provision. We fulfill His purpose. And we find true satisfaction.

What I have for your are...

Three ways to flourish within God's design...

Recognize That God Formed You for a Place and a Purpose (vv. 4–9)

Now we have greater detail regarding the process and material God formed us with — further setting man apart and above creation.

"God formed the man out of the dust from the ground."

Picture a master sculptor who works with clay. They don't just shape the vessel — they compile, mix together, and make their own clay. Then they shape it into the desired vessel.

That's what God did for us. That's what He was doing during the decision-making process — He considered who we would be. How He would make us. Then He personally crafted us.

But He didn't stop there — lest we be no different from all the other created living creatures.

Not only did God share His image with us — but He also shared His breath with us. In other words — He personally animated us. He brought us to life.

That's what it means when the text says God **"breathed the breath of life into his nostrils."**

This is true of all human beings. Saved and unsaved. Lost and found. In Christ and out of Christ.

Never doubt who you are.

Never deny who you are.

You are a human being.

You were made in God's image — and He alone made you alive.

We didn't evolve from primates.

You may share biological features with creatures — but you are not merely a creature.

You bear the image of God. You have “His breath of life” in you.

That distinction changes everything.

We have been set apart and above all of creation.

Nothing in the universe can do what we do. Nothing in the universe can image God like we do.

Nothing in the universe can glorify God like we can.

I need you to hold to this truth.

I need you to live this truth.

It's essential to understanding your role in creation —

and to relating to God according to your designed purpose.

So — God formed us. This we know.

But He also created a unique environment for us to inhabit — a place where we could bask in His glory and thrive in His provision.

Back to the text

“8 **The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed.**”

Within the recently ordered world,

God made a special place —

a primary place of habitation for humankind.

Just like God created environments for all the other living creatures —
now God does the same for us.

But like man himself, Eden was set apart.

A place just for us.

A place just for us and the Lord.

A place where we could experience, bask in, the Lord's presence.

I'm reminded of when Sheila and I

converted an extra bedroom into a nursery for our future children.

Everything was just for them.

The lighting. The temperature.

The furniture. The sounds. The decoration. Everything was designed to make them as comfortable and safe as possible —

so that we could be with them.

Although we had other rooms — we only spent time with our kids there, in their special space. **Their Eden.**

That's what the garden of Eden was for the first man.

A place just for them and God.

A place that had everything they needed to experience God and to thrive.

What made Eden so special was the fact that God was there.

I need you to hold on to that —

because despite the plush accommodations, none of it would have been soul-pleasing had God not been there.

It's the Creator's presence.

The One who considered us before He made us.

The One who formed us.

The One with whom He shared His image. The One to whom you and I owe our existence.

God made a space just for us and Him.

God decorated it for us.

God made the food we need for nourishment available to us.

And He established everlasting life with Him —

that's what **the tree of life** represents.

An invitation. Come and live with Me forever.

And He established a distinction between us and Him. Though we are like God in many ways — we will never be God.

We will never be equal to God.

That's what **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil** represents. A boundary. Pursue Me — but don't try to become Me.

And this is why both trees are placed in the middle of the garden. Side by side. The invitation and the boundary.

Together. **So that every time man walked through Eden, he would be reminded — God wants you close. But God alone is God.**

Let us now further explore what it means to be formed for a place.

Like the first man — you were formed for a specific place.

God has placed you where you are geographically for His glory — and to represent Him in the lives of people who don't know Him as Lord and Savior.

I'm talking about your city your community where you live.

Your biological family. Your school.

Your place of employment.

Where you spend your time.

And we're to be about that work until the Lord changes our season — or until He calls us home — whichever comes first.

That's why it's important at all times

for us to be where God would have us to be. To be in our Eden.

To be in a proper relationship where we commune with Him uninhibited —

and to be serving His purpose in the place and to the people He called us to image Him to.

The principle in this text —

and I've found it to be true in my own life — is this:

God assigned you a place from which to serve Him —and you need to stay in it.

But some of us don't want to hear that. Because staying put feels like falling behind.

There are some who navigate their lives like a NASCAR driver — in and out of lanes,

always jockeying to get ahead.

To do better. To get more.

If that's you, then let me help you — **contentment is not found in the next thing, unless that next thing is ordained by God.**

Oh, if I had the time — I would share with you the heartbreaking stories of people I've ministered to personally over the years who were convinced they knew better than God.

Just to jump into that marriage.

That new job. That new school. That new house. That new relationship. That new business venture. That new zip code.

And instead of having their dreams come true —
instead of getting ahead and enjoying a better quality of life — their dream became a nightmare.

That house they just had to have — destroyed them financially.
That spouse they couldn't live without — tore them down emotionally.

And here's the truth you don't want to hear...
The desire to leave the place God planted you
isn't always drive. It may be disobedience dressed up as drive.

Like the first man
— within your Eden you have all that you need:
The Lord's presence.
Provision. Protection. Purpose.
Which ultimately produces affirmation and satisfaction.

Be faithful to where God has placed you.
Give and get all that you can —
until the Lord either calls you home or moves you to a new place.
Stay in your assigned lane.
Stay in your Eden.

Because when you stay within the boundaries God set for you —
you walk in His protection.
You enjoy His provision. You fulfill His purpose.
And you find true satisfaction.

But the moment you step outside those lines — you step outside His covering.

Taking this concept one step further...

Embrace the Work God assigned to You as an Act of Worship (vv. 10–15)

That's the second way to flourish within God's design.
Verse 15 this time...

"The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it."

From day one,
man's role was more than just merely existing in Eden with God.
God gave them His presence, His provision — and a job.
Work that he was responsible for.

To any of you who have pictured in your mind Adam and Eve sprawled out on the beach, working on their tans,
sipping pineapple juice, and chopping it up with God —

You'd be dead wrong.

Eden was not a place of Nirvana.

Man had a job — and he was responsible for Eden itself.

Now catch this — surrounding his work was abundant provision. Rivers, gold, resources — all flowing freely. In other words — God made sure he had more than what he needed to do his job.

You need to understand this —
work was never a result of the fall. It was and still remains to this day — a calling.

God assigned dominion of the garden to Adam.

To tend it. Guard it. Steward it.

Although the garden was uniquely designed for man — God's gift, if you will — man still needed to take responsibility for it. To steward God's Eden: the plants, animals, and natural resources.

You might be thinking — what work was there to do? The world was perfect. Perfectly balanced. Everything functioned according to God's design.

True. But consider this — the fruit had to be harvested. Did you know that if you let a cucumber over-ripen on the vine, the vine will stop producing cucumbers? Even in a perfect world — **nature needs man to steward it.**

And if a perfect garden needed a faithful worker — how much more does your life?

So where does that leave us?

Your Eden — the place God assigned you to work — always involves a certain level of stewardship. Work that needs to be done.

He doesn't bless us so that we can do nothing with it — so that we can bury it in the ground like the one-talent servant who buried his master's money in the parable of the talents.

God expects us to work —to put to use what He's given us.

Whether that's overseeing what He's made us responsible for — or exercising the very gifts and abilities He's bestowed on us.

Think about this in two primary categories: areas of oversight that you're responsible for — and the gifts, the natural abilities, that He's bestowed on you.

Regarding areas of oversight — that could be anything from your job, your marriage, parenting, ministry, other people. Any place where you are the primary person responsible for ensuring continued growth and success.

And when it comes to gifts — think natural ability. Athleticism. Teaching. Communication. Leadership. Cooking. Organization. Mechanical understanding. Singing. Musical ability. To name a few.

These are things you can do that nobody taught you — they were bestowed on you by God. Not everyone has them. And all of us have at least one.

But even if you can't name a standout gift — you still have areas of oversight. You still have a marriage, a job, children, a ministry, people counting on you. **And that alone is enough to demand your faithfulness.**

My point is this — not only does God expect us to work, but He's given us the skill we need — and He expects us to do our job to the very best of our ability for His glory and for the good of others.

And if you're the person who feels like nobody notices what you do — the parent running on no sleep, the employee giving everything to a thankless job, the leader pouring into people who never say thank you —

God is not overlooking you. He put you there on purpose.

The goal isn't to love the work. **The goal is to be faithful in it.**

And if you're showing up — even when you don't feel like it — doing your work to the best of your ability — you're already honoring God with what He gave you in your Eden.

Like the mom who pours herself into her newborn — waking up at 2 AM, running on fumes, doing it all over again the next day — **that's worship.**

When that dad works a job he can't stand so his family never goes without — **that's worship.**

When that teacher stays late to help the one student everybody else gave up on — **that's worship.**

When that husband chooses to fight for his marriage instead of walking away — **that's worship.**

When that single mother holds it all together by God's grace — **that's worship.**

When that single person stays faithful — honoring God with their body, their time, their money — when nobody's watching and nobody's holding them accountable but God — **that's worship.**

When you show up for your ministry assignment and serve people who will never thank you — **that's worship.**

It doesn't have to feel spiritual to be spiritual. Every act of faithfulness in the place God planted you — your Eden — is an offering laid at God's feet. Because His children are working and serving according to their designed purpose with a content and joy-filled heart.

— — —

But should you choose to sit on what He's given you and do nothing — should you fail to embrace your God-assigned work — where your goal in life is to do as little as possible —

The Bible has a word for that.

It's called *idleness*.

[Second Thessalonians 3](#) deals with it directly. Being lazy. Refusing to work. Or as Prince put it — "*doing something close to nothing.*"

It's a sin — and it comes with immediate consequences.

The Apostle Paul says in verse 10 that he commanded those who refuse to work not be allowed to eat. Not be allowed to partake of the food provided by those who actually labored.

In other words — **if a man won't work, a man shouldn't eat.**

And let me be clear — I'm referring to people who are able to work but *refuse* to.

So not only do lazy people rob God of His worship — they also risk not being able to provide for themselves.

And oh, how might these United States change for the better — if every able-bodied person pulled their own weight — providing for themselves and contributing to the greater good of society.

Because the work God gave you — is not outside His boundaries. **It is the boundary.** It's the guardrail that keeps you purposeful, productive, and positioned for His blessing

To those of you who work — embrace your God-assigned role in Eden. View your labor as an act of worship. Not a grind. Not a paycheck. *Worship.*

To those of you who wrestle with idleness — it's time to adopt a true and proper Eden mentality. Where you worship God through your work. Where you do what it takes to provide for yourself and for others. No more excuses. No more coasting.

And to those of you who are already worshipping God through your work — keep up this holy work. What you do matters to God and it glorifies Him. Don't get distracted. Don't get caught up in man-centric ideologies that redefine your labor or diminish your calling. **Work your Eden — embracing what God assigned to you and to you alone.**

That's the second way to flourish within God's design... Embrace the work assigned to as an act of worship.
Third...

Obey God's Command Because His Boundaries Protect What His Hands Have Provided. (vv. 16–17)

Instead of looking at God's boundaries as Him keeping something *from* you — view them as Him protecting you *from* something.

That switch alone will free you to worship God all the more — and keep you from risking spiritual and physical damage to yourself.

Look at v16 with me...

“16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,..”

God gave Adam and Eve free run of the garden for food.

Tomatoes. Zucchini. Cucumbers. Okra.

Rice. Sweet corn.

And the sweetest watermelons you've ever tasted.

He says — you can have all of this for food.

Plus more.

Nothing have I kept from you — except eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now — because God is the Creator.

Because Adam and Eve belong to Him.

And because the garden is a gift to them —

then God should have first and final say regarding what's permissible in His garden.

And His word should be enough.

But notice what He does in the latter part of verse 17.

He explains to them *why* He forbade them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

He says...

for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

He could have just said it's off-limits and left it at that.

Kind of like our fathers did when we asked them a question.

They would say — *“Because I said so.”*

Anybody else grow up in a house like that? Where the why was never explained?

And if you did ask why, the answer was either “Because I said so” —

or — “Don't you talk back to me.”

Can I get a witness?

If anybody had a right to say *“Because I said so”* — it would be God. Yet He takes the time to explain to them *why* —

and He warns them of the consequences.

What I need you to see is this —

God's boundaries are not there to keep you from His best.

They're there to keep you in His best.

Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about.

There's a conversation you keep having with somebody you have no business talking to.

Late at night.

Behind your spouse's back.

You've told yourself it's harmless.

It's just a friendship.

But you know —

if your husband or your wife picked up your phone right now and read those messages — your marriage would explode.

That's your tree.

And God says — don't eat from it.
Not because He's cruel.
Because He knows what's on the other side of that bite.

Death.
The death of your marriage.
The death of your testimony.
The death of the peace you're standing in right now.

And some of you heard that and thought — "I'm good. That's not me."
But let me talk to you for a second.

For others it's an opportunity in front of you right now —
a deal, a promotion, a business move —
and you know that to get it,
you have to cut a corner.
Compromise your integrity.
Partner with somebody whose values don't align with yours.
Lie on the application.
Fudge the numbers.

And you've told yourself — *"I'll clean it up once I make it.
God will understand."*

No. No he won't
That's your tree.

And the fruit looks good.
It looks like provision.
It looks like progress.

But God says — don't eat from it.
Because what you build on deception
will collapse under the weight of what it cost you.

Your integrity. Your witness. Your peace.
And the very thing you thought would secure your future
becomes the thing that destroys it.

And it's not just those two.
When we reach for that which is off-limits to us —
the things that God has determined are not for you —
the things that might damage our relationship with Him —

we remove ourselves from the peace,
the tranquility,
the protection,
and the provision
that God has established for us.

Catch this!!!!!!
That very thing — or things —
that God says are off-limits?

Those are the very means
by which you are able to walk in
and thrive in your Eden.

Whether that be marriage.
Friendships. Business. Family.
You name it.

He knows that the very thing you think you need and desire

I'm talking about the thing that could blow up your marriage. Your reputation.

Your family.

Your career.

The thing that could taint your future marriage.

Even the things that could blow up this church.

And God says — that tree in your life? Don't eat from it. That thing. That person. That mindset. **Because it will be the death of life as you know it in your Eden.**

Obey God's Command Because His Boundaries Protect What His Hands Have Provided for you.

Conclusion:

I've shown you three things today.

Your place. Your work. Your boundary.

And all three of them are gifts.

God formed you with His own hands.

He breathed His own breath into you.

He planted a garden and placed you in it —

not randomly, not carelessly —

but with intention and purpose.

He gave you meaningful work to do.

He surrounded you with more than enough provision.

And He set one boundary — one — not to restrict you, but to protect everything He'd already given you.

That's the Eden life. That's what it looks like to flourish within God's design.

But I need to warn you.

Because everything I just described to you — can be lost.

Not through some catastrophic event.

But through one seemingly innocuous decision.

One reach. One moment where you decide you know better than the God.

And Church — that's the part that should sober you.

Because Adam didn't fall in a dark alley.

He didn't fall in a bar.

He didn't fall in some back room somewhere.

He fell in the garden. In the presence of God. Surrounded by everything he could ever want or need.

He fell in his Eden.

Which means proximity to blessing does not make you immune to temptation. Being in the right place doesn't mean you can't still make the wrong choice.

But here's the difference between Adam and you.

You've experienced the consequences of sin.

You've already crossed a boundary and felt the fallout.

You already know what it's like to lose your peace.

To damage a relationship.

To watch something you built crumble because you reached for what God told you to leave alone.

You know what's on the other side of that tree.

So you have no excuse.

You know what the boundary is for. You know who set it. You know why it's there.
And you know what happens when you cross it.

So this week — I'm charging you.

Stay in your Eden.

Not somebody else's. Yours. The place God assigned you.
The community He planted you in.
The family He gave you. The ministry He called you to.

Do your work.

Not halfway. Not when you feel like it.
Not when it's convenient.

Do it as worship. Do it with excellence. Do it knowing that God sees every ounce of effort you pour into what He placed in your hands.

And trust the boundary.

The boundary you resent most may be the one protecting you most. So, stay within it. B/c trust me, you won't like what's on the other side.

Would you stand and declare this with you me....

When I live within God's design for me:

His protection covers me.

His provision sustains.

His purpose drives me.

And His satisfaction fills me.

Don't let the enemy talk you out of where God has already placed you. Best is only found in God.

Guard your Eden, Church. Stay in your Eden

Let's pray!

Closing: