

25-1019p Transcript

25-1019p - *Genesis 2:15-17*, Scott Reynolds

Bible Reader: John Nousek This transcript transcribed by TurboScribe.ai, (Detailed Summary by Grok, xAI)

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Adam Gets a Job - Genesis 2:15-17

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader: John Nousek

(0:04) So this evening in Psalm 8 verses 3 through 6, (0:11) when I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have (0:17) ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you visit him? (0:27) You have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor. (0:36) You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hands, (0:40) and you have put all things under his feet. Amen. (0:44)

Transcript (0:04 - 34:42), Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(0:50) Good evening. We are in Genesis chapter 2, continuing our journey through the first 11 (0:57) chapters of Genesis into the foundations of our faith, the beginning of God's narrative (1:03) with humanity. So this evening, we'll pick up where we left off (1:10) this morning, beginning with Genesis chapter 2 verse 15.

(1:17) The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (1:23) Verse 15 appears in the creation narrative before humanity's fall into sin. (1:30) It's described in Genesis chapter 3. It reveals that God intentionally placed Adam (1:39) in the garden of Eden, not just for rest or leisure, but with a purposeful assignment (1:48) to cultivate or work the garden and to guard or preserve it.

The Hebrew words here, (1:55) I'm not going to try to pronounce them, but the word for to work or to serve and the word for (2:03) to keep or to watch over imply meaningful, hang on a second, sorry, imply meaningful labor that (2:18) involves stewardship, creativity, and responsibility. And this setup reflects humanity's (2:25) role as image bearers of God from Genesis chapter 1, 26 through 28, we were made in his image, (2:35) who himself, God, who himself had just completed the work of creation and had declared it very good. (2:45) The work is something that God likes to do.

And work in this pre-fall state was an integral part (2:52) of paradise, a divine gift that allowed humans to participate in God's ongoing care for the world (3:02) to find fulfillment and exercise dominion in a harmonious environment free from hardship. (3:10) Work is not a consequence of sin. It occurs before sin.

It was designed to be enjoyable, (3:22) productive, and reflective of God's own character, enabling humans to flourish in relationship (3:31) with him and creation. The curse introduced in Genesis

chapter 3, verses 17 through 19, (3:38) changes the nature of work, but doesn't eliminate its inherent goodness. In chapter 3, verses 17 (3:48) through 19, it says, and to Adam, he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife (3:55) and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground (4:03) because of you. In pain, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles (4:11) it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face, (4:19) you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, (4:27) for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. So here, sin brings frustration, (4:36) thorny opposition, sweat-inducing toil, and the ultimate futility of death. (4:44) The mandate to work persists.

The challenge is the curse. Work itself remains a core aspect of (4:53) human purpose, redeemable through faith and often seen in Christian theology as a way to glorify God (5:01) even in a fallen world. John chapter 15, verse 8, by this my father is glorified, Jesus says, (5:10) that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

The book of Proverbs reinforces (5:18) this by repeatedly, repeatedly, extolling the virtues of diligence. Oh, wow. (5:31) By repeatedly extolling the virtues of diligent work while warning against slothfulness, (5:38) laziness, or idleness, it presents work as a pathway to provision, wisdom, and stability, (5:46) contrasting it with the self-destructive outcomes of laziness.

There are some key examples drawn (5:53) from various Proverbs passages using the ESV. Proverbs 10, 4 through 5, well, the text says, (6:07) a slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a (6:15) prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.

And the contrast here is (6:23) that diligent leads to wealth and honor, and laziness results in poverty and disgrace. Proverbs (6:30) 12, 24, the hand of the diligent will rule while the slothful will be put to forced labor. So hard (6:39) work brings authority and freedom.

Slothfulness leads to subjugation and drudgery. Excuse me. (6:50) Proverbs 13, 4, the soul of the slugger craves and gets nothing while the soul of the diligent (6:59) is richly supplied.

Laziness leaves desires unfulfilled. Diligence satisfies and provides (7:08) abundance. Proverbs 18, 9, whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.

(7:17) So neglect through laziness is as harmful as active destruction. Proverbs 21, 25, (7:30) the desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. Slothfulness leads to ruin (7:46) and death-like consequences implied is that work sustains life.

Proverbs 24, 30-34. Proverbs 24, (8:03) verses 30-34. I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold (8:15) it was all overgrown with thorns.

The ground was covered with nettles and its stone wall (8:22) was broken down. Then I saw and considered it. I looked and received instruction.

A little sleep, (8:30) a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber (8:38) and want like an armed man. So laziness invites chaos and sudden poverty.

(8:46) Observation of this teaches the value of proactive work.

(8:59) These Proverbs use vivid imagery like the ant as a model of self-motivated diligence in Proverbs 6, (9:08) verses 6-11, or the sluggard making absurd excuses in Proverbs 22, 13. (9:17) There's a lion in the street. To drive home that work fosters prosperity, security, and wisdom (9:25) while slothfulness erodes them.

Overall, the biblical view encourages seeing work as a (9:33) blessing to embrace even amid post-fall difficulties aligning with the original intent (9:43) in Eden. Genesis 2, verses 16-17, we begin looking at the origins of ethics and morals. (9:56) Genesis 2, 16 and 17 provide a solid foundation, and I should read it.

(10:01) It goes, and the Lord God commanded the man saying, you may surely eat of every tree of (10:08) the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat. For in the day (10:16) that you eat of it, you shall surely die. So this passage provides a solid foundation for exploring (10:25) the biblical introduction to ethics, morals, free will, and the consequences of choice.

(10:32) This passage marks a pivotal moment in the creation narrative where God establishes (10:38) a clear moral boundary in an otherwise perfect world. (10:47) We'll look at these ideas by expanding on the theological implications, (10:51) drawing in additional scriptural connections for depth, (10:57) refining the contrast between biblical and naturalistic worldviews, (11:02) and emphasizing the interplay between divine authority, human responsibility, (11:09) and the universality that God's ethical framework is universal. (11:24) We'll also address this and how it sets the stage for the broader story of redemption.

(11:32) So the introduction of ethics and morals, a divine command in paradise. (11:38) This passage also indeed serves as the Bible's first explicit introduction to ethics, (11:46) the principles of right conduct, and morals, the standard of behavior derived from those principles. (11:57) Here God commands Adam, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of (12:02) the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat.

For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely (12:08) die. This isn't just a rule, it's the establishment of a moral order in a world that was very good, (12:19) Genesis 131. Up to this point, creation is harmonious with no inherent conflict (12:25) or wrongdoing.

The command introduces the concept of obedience as a moral good, (12:33) and disobedience as a moral evil tied directly to consequences, (12:39) and the consequences are painful, the consequence of death. Chapter 3 amplifies this point. (12:49) Adam and Eve's actual behavior, disobedience prompted by the serpents, demonstrates the tension (12:56) between divine standards and human action.

This leads to the fall where knowledge of good and evil (13:03) is gained through experience rather than divine revelation resulting in shame, blame, and expulsion, (13:15) Genesis 3, 6 through 24. This narrative isn't merely historical, it's archetypal, (13:23) and that means it's an archetype of the laws and the methods that God would use (13:33) from this pattern. It becomes a pattern.

It explains why humanity is universally, (13:42) that humanity universally grapples with moral dilemmas, echoing Romans 7, 7 through 8, (13:52) where Paul describes the law, God's command as the revealer of sin. I would not have known (13:58) what coveting really was if the law had not said,

you shall not covet. But I do like the point (14:10) that morals and ethics is something that man universally, all over the world, (14:20) all over all of the times from way back to now, universally grapples with morals and ethics.

(14:32) Number two, the origin of right and wrong, biblical versus naturalistic perspectives. (14:39) So let's look at the question, where does the idea of right and wrong come from? (14:45) From a naturalistic lens, one rooted in evolutionary materialism, there is no (14:52) satisfactory answer. In a worldview where life emerges from impersonal processes, (15:00) molecules to microbes, the man, morality would have to be an emergent property, (15:08) perhaps a byproduct of social evolution for survival.

But during that process from molecules (15:17) to microbes to man, we're in that process that's now from inanimate to animate objects. (15:30) Where in there does this idea of ethics even come from in a naturalistic process? (15:43) But this reduces right and wrong, if it's a byproduct of social evolution, (15:49) to subjective preferences over cultural or cultural constructs. What justifies calling (15:57) altruism good and murder bad if both could aid survival in different contexts? Philosophers (16:06) like Nietzsche critique this, arguing that without a transcendent standard, something else, (16:14) which is interesting, by the way, because he's talking outside the box in Del Tackett's terms.

(16:25) So Nietzsche argued without a transcendent, something outside nature, standard, morality is (16:34) just will to power. Someone's wills, you know, right, might makes right idea. Evolutionary (16:44) explanations describe how behaviors might evolve, but fail to explain why they evolve.

(16:50) They ought to be normative or universal. Normative is establishing a behavior relating to (17:00) a standard or norm. And who's standard? What norm? Where does that come from in a naturalistic (17:08) environment, worldview? Who establishes that? And who cares? Why should I listen to it? (17:17) Then universal affecting are done by all, and why should someone's idea of what right and wrong be (17:28) forced on everybody? As C.S. Lewis argued in Mere Christianity, our innate sense of a moral law (17:37) points beyond nature to a moral lawgiver.

In contrast, the biblical lens grounds morality (17:45) and God's character and will. God doesn't arbitrarily decide right and wrong. It's an (17:52) extension of his holy nature.

Isaiah 6, 3, and one called out to another and said, (18:03) holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. And 1 Peter 1, 16, (18:14) because it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy.

Now Genesis 2, 16 through 17, God justifies (18:24) the standard. He is the creator, so his commands carry inerrant authority. This is an afterthought, (18:32) but woven into the fabric of creation.

To elaborate, this divine foundation resolves (18:39) the is-ought problem coined by David Hume. David Hume was a Scottish philosopher, historian, (18:48) economist, and essayist, widely regarded as one of the most influential figures of the Enlightenment, (18:55) born in Edinburgh. He is best known for his philosophical works that emphasize skepticism, (19:03) empiricism, and naturalism.

So naturalism describes... (19:14) So to elaborate, this divine foundation resolves the is-ought problem that David Hume coined. (19:24) Naturalism describes what is, survival instincts, a camp bridge to what ought to be. The Bible does, (19:34) because God is good against murder, Genesis 9, 6, rooted in humanity's image... I'm sorry.

(19:43) The Bible does, because God is good, Psalm 105, the Lord is good, his loving kindness is everlasting, (19:51) and his faithfulness to all generations. We ought to obey this framework. (20:01) Also explains moral absolutes, like the prohibition against murder in Genesis 9, 6. (20:08) Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed.

For in the image (20:21) of God he made him man. And Genesis 1, 27, God created man in his own image. In the image of (20:29) God, he created him.

So number three, the universality of ethics, extending to the (20:36) spiritual realm. In our study, we've learned that the spiritual realm was created right before the (20:43) natural realm. And we noted that the angels witnessed God creating the natural realm.

(20:49) From the Bible, we understand there is a spiritual realm, and therefore we ask if ethics are universal, (21:00) applying even to the spiritual realm. If so, then that would underscore God's sovereignty over all (21:07) creation. And the Bible portrays angels as moral agents who face their own test of obedience.

(21:23) Some rebelled, led by Lucifer, and were cast out of heaven, 2 Peter 2, 4 and Jude 1, 6. (21:32) These angelic fall predates humanities, suggesting that God's ethical standard pre-exists and (21:41) transcends the physical world. Both realms are bound by these ethics, but with different outcomes. (21:49) Angels existing in the realm of sight with full knowledge of God's glory, Hebrews 1, 14, (21:57) received no offer of redemption, perhaps because the rebellion was willful and without deception, (22:04) unlike Eve's in 1 Timothy 2, 14.

Humans in the realm of faith, Hebrews 11, 1, are extended grace (22:14) through Christ's atonement, Romans 5, 12-21. And the broader biblical theme of cosmic order, (22:24) God's ethics aren't compartmentalized, they govern heaven and earth, Matthew 6, 10. (22:32) Your kingdom come, your will be done, as it says in the model prayer, on earth as it is in heaven.

(22:40) So in the broader theme of—oh, I read that. Okay. (22:48) Number four, responsibility, free will, and the absence of death.

The command of Genesis 2, 16, (22:55) and 17 introduces personal responsibility and free will in a pristine environment. (23:04) Adam isn't a puppet. He's given abundance, every tree with one restriction, creating genuine choice.

(23:12) This presupposes free will. Obedience requires the possibility of disobedience, (23:21) and a death-free creation, Genesis 1, verses 29 and 30, implies herbivorous harmony, (23:29) no predation, where there's no predators. The warning of death introduces stakes, (23:38) foreshadowing sin's entry, Romans 5, 12.

Sin entered the world through one man and death (23:45) through sin. This sharply contradicts old earth evolutionary models, which posit billions of years (23:53) of death, disease, and suffering before humans. Fossils interpreted as evidence of ancient (24:00) extinction would imply death.

Extinction and death, they kind of go hand in hand. (24:11) As part of God's very good creation, undermining the biblical sequence where death is the last (24:17) enemy, 1 Corinthians 15, 26, resulting from sin in Genesis 3, 19. To elaborate, (24:27) young earth creationists, aligning with a literal reading, see this as affirming that suffering (24:34) entered post-fall, pointing to Christ's resurrection as the reversal, no more death.

(24:41) This framework elevates human dignity. Our choices have eternal ripple effects, (24:48) and God provides a way back through faith. So, concluding reflections, from command to redemption.

(24:58) In summary, Genesis 2, 16 and 17 isn't a prohibition. It's the genesis of moral (25:09) awareness, grounding ethics in God's authority, and inviting humanity into relationship (25:16) through obedience. This counters naturalistic emptiness, affirms universal standards, (25:24) and introduces choice and perfection.

You know, isn't it interesting that the scoffers (25:34) are pro-choice? They try to say that they are the people that give you a choice, right? (25:55) I just thought that was ironic. But God provides a way back through faith. (26:10) So, in summary, again, this counters naturalistic emptiness, affirms universal standards, (26:19) and introduces choice and perfection.

Improving on this, we see the narrative arc from one tree (26:26) forbidden, knowledge of good and evil, to another tree offered, the cross, where Christ bears the (26:33) curse, Galatians 3, 13. This transforms ethics from mere rules to a pathway of grace, (26:43) where morals reflect our restoration to God's image. So, application.

I'm only going to do (26:54) a little bit of this. But biblical principles from Genesis 2, 15 through 17, and related passages (27:04) such as the Proverbs, offer profound applications for our lives today, particularly in how we view (27:12) work, stewardship, ethics, and our relationship with God, right from chapter 2 of Genesis. (27:26) Work is divine calling and opportunity for fulfillment.

Reframe your perspective on work. (27:33) View your job, whether in an office, home, or elsewhere, as a sacred opportunity (27:40) to partner with God in his ongoing care for creation. (27:46) Pursue diligence.

Proverbs warns against laziness. In a world of distractions like social media or (27:56) procrastination, commit to disciplined effort. Set goals, manage time wisely, and take pride in (28:04) tasks well done, knowing they align with God's design for productivity.

Balance work and rest, (28:16) God's pattern of creation, work followed by rest, in Genesis 2, verses 2 through 3. (28:23) Suggest a rhythm. Avoid burnout by prioritizing Sabbath-like rest to reflect, recharge, and (28:30) reconnect with God. I have to tell you, I think that's something that Christians, maybe in general, (28:41) but us in particular, haven't really focused on the Sabbath.

Not the Sabbath-Sabbath. We know it's (28:54) the Law of Moses, but it actually, like circumcision, predates the Law of Moses. (29:02) And that was Abraham's, not that we should be circumcised, (29:07) but more like, perhaps, marriage that predates the Law of Moses.

Marriage occurred in (29:15) Genesis chapter 2, that we're going to see the next time. (29:24) And observing the Sabbath occurred even before that. God rested on the Sabbath, (29:31) and that was the reason he gave to the Israelites why they should.

And I think, (29:37) you know, when we think of rest, we think of a vacation, and I don't know about you, (29:43) but a lot of times when I come back from vacation, I'm more tired than when I left. (29:49) And I don't think that's the idea. It's not—the idea of rest is not to have fun.

(29:59) And that's not the purpose. I think it's something that we need to think about, (30:08) especially me. So view stewardship as a core responsibility.

(30:15) Care for creation and an era of environmental concerns take practical steps, (30:21) like reducing waste, conserving energy, supporting sustainable practices. (30:27) Be wise stewards of what God's made us stewards over. He's given us a responsibility.

He expects (30:36) us to be wise stewards. Manage resources wisely, whether finances, time, or skills. Use what God (30:44) has given you thoughtfully.

Create budgets, invest in personal growth, and share resources generously (30:51) to reflect God's provision. And ethics and morals. Anchor decisions in God's Word.

(31:00) In a relativistic culture where morality often shifts with trends, use Scripture as your guide (31:07) for ethical decisions. For example, when faced with dilemmas at work, cutting corners for profit, (31:13) prioritize integrity, reflecting God's truth. Exercise free will responsibly.

(31:22) Show that free will comes with—Genesis 2, 16 and 17 shows that free will comes with consequences. (31:32) Adam and Eve had free will, and it cost them their life. Navigate a fallen world with hope.

(31:44) Preserve through—persevere through challenges. Even work or life feels futile due to setbacks (31:51) or opposition. Lean on God's promises of redemption.

As Del Tackett puts it, (32:00) work after the fall is like swimming upstream. There's still value in work, (32:14) and it's there for us to enjoy, but it's not as easy as it would have been. (32:27) So, Joe, we don't know how good it would have been, but we do know that it's difficult now.

(32:38) And universal ethics and spiritual accountability. Recognize spiritual realities. (32:45) Acknowledge the unseen battles and align your faith with God's truth to stand firm against (32:51) temptation or deception, just as Adam was called to obey in Eden.

And you have to look at the world (33:02) today and see that the only thing that makes sense is that there's a battle between good and evil (33:10) going on, and that there really is a Satan, and there really is a God. Otherwise, (33:18) the way people—the way intelligent people are acting makes no sense. (33:26) They have to be the smartest, insane people in the world, because it's (33:35) a—arguing about bathrooms, about gender is insane.

(33:41) That's just not right. There's something wrong. Something happened.

(33:49) So, the principles from Genesis 2, 15 through 17, and the Proverbs call us to seek work (33:55) as a divine gift, embrace stewardship, and ground our ethics and God's unchanging character. Despite (34:02) the false challenges, we can live with purpose by approaching work and choices as acts of worship, (34:09) trusting in God's redemptive plan through Christ. In a world often marked by relativism (34:15) and futility, these truths offer a hopeful, purposeful framework for flourishing in (34:23) relationship with God, others, and creation.

And that's the sermon. So, is there anyone here who (34:31) needs to respond to the invitation that's being extended now, and come while we stand and sing?