

“Father, thank you so much for being our guide. Lord, every breath we take we are reminded that you are our Creator, our designer, our engineer. Father, today as we talk about the reason for which we were created, I pray for that child of God who just needs to be reminded of that. Lord, I pray especially for that person who may be here today and who does not really understand what they were put here on this earth for. I pray that will be crystal clear when we finish today. I pray this in your precious name. Amen.”

If you are a guest with us for the first time today, my name is Rick and I serve as the Lead Pastor here at Christ Fellowship. By the way, I want to welcome all of our campuses all across Miami Dade County who are joining us for this study today. We are in a study in the Book of Genesis which we launched a couple of weeks back, and this is going to be a study that is broken up into series along the way. It is going to take us pretty much all the way through the year 2013. So we are going back to the beginning in our time together on the weekends at Christ Fellowship. I want to invite you to open your Bibles to Genesis, chapters one, two, and three. We are going to kind of navigate those three chapters. While you are turning there, let me share this with you.

A few years back, I went on the hunt for a golf cart. But get it, not just any golf cart. I wanted a golf cart that would be street legal. By that I mean I wanted one that I could drive around the streets of my neighborhood. So I went on line and I searched e-bay, and I searched Craig’s List, and I looked week after week after week, until at last it was like Utopia. I found one exactly like I wanted, and here it is, right here. Now mind you, in the beginning, this golf cart didn’t look like this. In the beginning, it was fairly plain. It was fairly bare, but now this golf cart has been transformed. You can see, it sits up in the air. It has big tires. It has chrome rims. It has a horn on it that makes it all street legal. It’s got seat belts on it. It has head lights, and tail lights. It has blinkers. It’s University of Miami green! “Go ‘Canes!” At Christmas, we had lights on it, and this thing will go up to twenty-five miles per hour. I love that ride!

But folks, check this out. I really didn’t buy the golf cart just for me. Don’t get me wrong: I like to ride in it, but not by myself. The truth is, I bought this golf cart so I can hang out with Autumn, my granddaughter. The golf cart is really just a place for me to be able to be with her. In fact, we love to take this thing to Black Point marina. There is kind of a path on Old Cutler Road. You can get on this thing and go all the way to Black Point marina. We love to take it and go out to Biscayne Bay. But one of our favorite spots is the Shell station right down the street on Old Cutler, because we go in there. We always buy the old bottled Coca Cola. We take one of those and we put peanuts in

it. It's a great thing! How many of you have ever put peanuts in your Coca Cola? It's great, isn't it? You need to try that. Anyway, we love to sit out on the curb with the Coca Cola, and we just sit there and talk. In fact, sometimes we don't talk at all. We just sit there and watch the traffic. But folks, I love it because Autumn likes to hang out with me, and I like to hang out with her. t got the golf cart as a place for us to hang out together.

Let me turn a corner and draw an analogy to that, because what an image of God and us. You see, when we look in the Book of Genesis and when we go back to the beginning of our story with God, we find out that God created this incredible planet called the earth. You know, He created the entire cosmos, the universe, but then He created this planet. You remember that at the beginning the planet was barren, like the golf cart. It was very plain. In fact, Genesis 1:2 says this: *"Now the earth (when God showed up) was formless and empty."* But God showed up on this planet and He transformed it. Folks, what I want you to get is that He didn't create this earth just for Him, and He didn't create this earth just for us. No, He created it for Him and us. The earth was intended to be this place, intended to be this ride, for us to enjoy and to enjoy with our God, with our Creator. In fact, when God had everything just the way He wanted it, back there in the beginning, before the fall, before sin came, when God had everything perfect, He would come down in the cool of the day just to hang out with the people He created. We're going to talk more about that in a moment. But to put it in the vernacular, God would come down to the golf cart that He had created, and He would get in the golf cart and ride with the children that He had created. Here is why He does that, and this is my proposition today.

This is so fundamental, and is going to be repetitive for some of you, but it is so fundamental to Genesis. You see, when God created human beings, He created us for one primary purpose, and that was for Him to have a relationship with us. In fact, when God created you, when God made the decision to bring you into this world, to give you life, He did that with one primary purpose in mind, and that was not to have religion with you. It was not to have a tradition with you. It was not to have a ritual with you. It was not to hang rules on you. God brought you into this world, He created you for a relationship, and He created you, as you are going to see, in a relationship. You say, "What do you mean by having a relationship with God, and how do I have a relationship with the Almighty God? How can I have a relationship with my Creator?" Well, that is so fundamental to the Book of Genesis. We find out as we go back to the beginning of the story, and then the rest of the story makes more sense. With that in

mind, I want to give you two thoughts today. We are going to find out about this relationship.

Number one: God engineered the relationship. Look at Genesis 1:26: *Then God said, "Let us make (what) man."* Stop there, because the word "man" is a translation of the Hebrew word *adama*, and *adama* means dirt, or ground. So God named the very first man He created, Adam, which literally means dirt man or ground man, because that is what Adam was created from. So folks, there is this paradox at the heart of what it means to be a human being, because on the one hand God says we are a dirt man. We are ground people. But on the other hand, and don't miss the balance of what He said in verse 26: *Then God said, "Let us make adama. Let us make a dirt man; let us make a ground man. So, God says that we are dirt on the one hand, but watch the balance) man in our image, in our likeness."* I love that. We are dirt. We are dust, but we are made in the image of God.

We sang a song a few weeks back that went like this: "He makes beautiful things out of dust: us." I love that, because to God, you are beautiful, no matter who you are, or what you have become, or what you have done. Whatever other peoples' assessment may be of you, don't sweat it, because here is why. Verse 26: *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, and in our likeness."* You say, "Meaning what?" Meaning you are not God, but you are like God.

Mark it down. There is something of God in you. It is His image. It is His likeness, and one of the ways you are like God is this: You are a three dimensional person. In other words, just as God is a trinity, you are a trinity. God is a triune being. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You too are a triune being. You are a body, a soul, and spirit. In fact, look at 1 Thessalonians 5:23. It says, *"May your whole spirit, soul, and body."* So, you are a three-part person, and yet, you are one.

Now, I want to give you an illustration of this with this Russian stacking doll. Imagine the outside doll is your physical body. In other words, you have a body that is your physical dimension, but you are not just a body. The world tends to think we are – just a physical body, just an animal, but you are not, because inside your body, you have a soul. Your soul is your psychological person. It is what enables you to feel. It is what enables you to have emotions. It is what makes you cognitive. It enables you to think through things. But, you are not just two-dimensional either, because there is this intangible part of you that God calls your spirit, and your spirit is your God dimension. So, you are three parts, body, soul, and spirit, and yet, you are one part.

All three dimensions, body, soul, and spirit are engineered by God so you can have a relationship with Him. I want you to think about it. In your body you experience God's

creation. It is through your body that you experience sight. You see God's creation. You hear God's creation. You touch God's creation. You taste it. You smell it. It is through your physical body that you experience God's creation. Then it is in your soul, your emotions, your cognitive dimension that you are able to experience the love of God, the compassion of God, the mercy of God, the goodness of God, the graciousness of God. All of that happens in our soul. Then you have that third dimension, your spirit dimension. That is the part of you that really sets you apart from the world. That's the part of you that enables you to worship God. In fact, Jesus said that they that worship God must worship Him in spirit. It comes out of your spirit and you must do it in truth. So get it: You are a three dimensional person, and all of that has been engineered by God so that you can have this incredible relationship with Him.

I use the word engineered, because an engineer creates. That is what engineers do. An engineer begins with the end in mind, with the goal in mind. In other words, an engineer envisions what he wants to create, what he wants to design, and what that creation is going to be able to do. Then once he envisions what he wants to create, he goes to work creating it, so that in the end he has created what he wanted. That was God. God envisioned what He wanted you to be like before He brought you into the world. He wanted a creation that He could have a relationship with. But listen: God is quintessentially relational. By that I mean that God is personal. God is not like Star Wars. He is not the force that is out there in the universe. That is what Einstein sort of thought.

God is not some kind of cosmic energy out there that is removed and detached and without feelings, without emotions. No. God is personal. With that in mind, you and I were painstakingly engineered by our Creator, body, soul, and spirit, so that the Creator would be able to have this relationship with the people that He created. That is why you are here. When you boil it all down, when you reduce it to the lowest common denominator of what you are on this earth for, at the very bottom of it all, you were created to have a relationship, not religion but a relationship with God. Here is the most amazing part of our story. God initiates the relationship. He started the whole thing. With that in mind, let's read Genesis 2:7. The Bible says, *"The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. 8] "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed."* Don't you love that about our God? He created this earth for us to enjoy. In fact, watch this: 9] *"And the Lord God made all kinds of trees to grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye...."*

There again is the love and the goodness of our Creator. He could have just created sticks, just to generate the atmosphere so we could live here. He could have just put a stick there, but He didn't. He created trees that you look at and I look at, and our eyes are tuned to look at and see that and say, "That is beautiful!" You can hear the wind blowing through the leaves. God created that and wired our ears so that is pleasing. Not only that, but listen to verse nine again.

9] "And the Lord God made all kinds of trees to grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." Isn't it amazing how food hangs on a tree? I know some of you wish that money hung on a tree, but isn't it interesting that food does. Star fruit, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, mangos, avocados. I don't know about you but I'm impressed with this God we have. Listen to verse 10] "A river watering the garden flowed from Eden..."

Pardon my fascination, but God didn't just make rivers. He made rivers that flow and that cascade down the mountains and trickle through the valleys. We could see that stream, and again, He wired our eyes so that we could look at it and be amazed by it; and wired our ears so that as the stream trickles it is so peaceful, and so calm. My point is, God made this beautiful golf cart, and He made this beautiful earth, and then He didn't just make it, He took us and He put us on the golf cart. He put us on this earth. He put us in this Garden of Eden, and then He came to be with us.

Listen to Genesis 3:8: *"Then the man and his wife [Adam and Eve] heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day."* I'll never get over that! God created this incredible place called the earth, and then He put Adam and Eve on that earth. Every day in the cool of the day, God would come down, do you know why? Just to be with the people He created. Just to hang out with the people He created. You say, "Why?" Because that is why He created them and created us in the first place. And that is why He created the earth as a place for Him to be able to be here with us.

Folks, can you imagine the thrill of Adam and Eve. I mean, they were put there –let me read this: Genesis 2:15 *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work."* By the way, next week we are going to do something a little bit different. We are going to do a mini-series. I've never done a mini-series. A two-part mini-series will be entitled "Work Matters". In other words, your work, that stuff you do eight, ten, twelve hours a day. Sometimes we artificially separate work from God, and never come together. I want to show you how work is actually a form of worship. You've got to be back next week for that.

But, anyway, can you imagine Adam and Eve there working the garden, and they don't know what sweat is because that hasn't happened yet. They don't know what tired is. They are working and caring for the Garden and all of a sudden, the Bible says that they would hear God walking in the Garden. Can you imagine what that must have been like? Adam would say to Eve, "I hear God." Then they would just drop everything to go and be with God. Do you know why? Because that is why God created them. That is why God put you here on this earth, so He could have a relationship with you.

You see, God wants to walk in the garden of your heart. Sometimes you sense that, that God is moving in your heart, and God is saying to just drop everything, if you will, and just come and spend time with Him. You see, it is kind of funny because all I have to do is call over to Rebecca's house, my daughter, and ask her to put Autumn on. I say, "Autumn, do you want to go for a ride in the golf cart?" And she goes, "Yes! Yes! Come and get me." We love that, because I just love to be with her. You just ride, and you talk. You see, God is the same way. This is why it is so important to go back to the Book of Genesis. We go back to the beginning and we read the start of the story: Not in the middle of the story. Not at the end of the story, but when we read the beginning of the story, it is then that we grasp mentally, intellectually, why it is that God created us in the first place, and the reason He did that is because He wants to have a personal, intimate relationship with us.

Think about it. God didn't say to Adam and Eve, "Hey, when I come down in the cool of the day, you need to get all dressed up. It's me. I'm God. Put on your Sunday best." No. If I remember, they actually did not have clothes. Clothes hadn't been invented yet. And God didn't say, "Hey, when I show up, go into this sanctuary, and I want you to be very reverent when I show up." God didn't say that. God didn't say, "You know, when I come, what we are going to do is we are going to go through a religious ritual, and it is going to be a tradition that I am going to give you and you are going to stand up when I say stand up and when I say sit you are going to sit, and when I say do this, you will do that. God didn't do any of that. There was no religion. God just came down for one reason, and that was to be with the children that He had created, just like you want to be with your children. That is why God made us.

That has always been the way with God. Folks, what I really love is that Adam and Eve didn't have to pursue God. God came down to them. When you look at the Bible, that is the way God is. That is the way He has always been. In fact, God pursues us. You look at every other religion in the world and with all the other gods people are trying to pursue that god. People are trying to appease that god. People are trying to satisfy that god. But listen, with our God, with the true God, we are not pursuing Him. He

pursues us. We are not necessarily trying to satisfy Him. He longs to satisfy us. He longs to satisfy you with His unconditional love, and with His everlasting love.

You see, it is hard to imagine, but dirt people that we are, ground men that we are, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords actually pursues us. He comes after us, even when we blow it. Maybe you are not a church person. Maybe you are new here, and all of this is kind of news to you, but you may be thinking: "You know Rick, I know God pursues people, but not me." You may be thinking that God pursues good people. In fact, let me ask you something: What do you think about when you think about what God thinks about you? What do you think about? For some of you, you think "He thinks I'm bad." Or, I think when He thinks about me, "He doesn't like me". I think when He thinks about me, "He has bad feelings".

He doesn't. When God thinks about you, this is what He thinks. He thinks, "I love you, and no matter what you have done, no matter what you have become, no matter how far away you think you are, He loves you, and He is going to pursue you. In fact, when God showed up in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3, do you realize that Adam and Eve had broken the only rule that God had given them? God said, "There is a whole earth full of trees. Have at them! Oranges, apples, whatever you want to have. But one tree called the knowledge of good and evil, don't eat of that one. It will kill you." What did they go and do? They go eat out of that tree. You would think God would think "I don't like them. I'm going to destroy them." But God doesn't. God actually pursued them. In fact, let me tell you something. If you study the Bible, God pursues us from the Book of Genesis all the way through the Book of Revelation. In fact, let me show you that. Revelation 3:20. God says: "*Here I am. I stand at the door and (what?) knock.*" God is pursuing us. "I'm knocking at the door." Jesus depicts Himself here as standing outside of your life, and He is knocking at the door of your heart. Basically what He is saying is, "Hey, I'm out here. Open the door. I want to come into your life."

I don't know about you, but when somebody knocks at my door, the first thing I want to know is who is at the door. The second thing I want to know is what they want.

Often we think, "What do they want from me?" Many of you think that. In fact, that is what a lot of people think about God. God is knocking at the door of their heart, and as tangible and as ethereal as that may sound, we all know who it is. We sense God knocking at the door of our heart. A lot of people are like, "God, what do you want? Before I open up the door and let you in, what do you want from me, because God, I'm afraid if I open up the door you will come in and ruin things. God, I'm afraid if I let you into my life, you will take away all the fun. You'll hang a bunch of rules, and religion, and tradition, and I don't know if I want that, God."

So, God answers the questions. This is what He wants. Watch this. Verse 20: *"Here I am: I stand at the door and knock! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and (I will make that person religious. Is that what it says? No. It says, I'll come in and I've got a bunch of rules to put on you. Is that what He says? I'll come in and depending on how long you let me stand out here knocking, we have to have a talk about that. Is that what God says? No. He says) "Here I am: I stand at the door and knock!" God is pursuing you. "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and will eat with him and he with me."*

I love that, because there are no more intimate words that Jesus could have tagged onto the end of that statement than to say, if you will open the door to your life; if you will open the door to your heart and let Him in, He would come in and eat with you, because in that day, in ancient times, when somebody invited you to eat with them, the purpose wasn't to chow down. Eating was simply a way of being together. Eating was simply a way of hanging out. Eating was like the golf cart, a way to get together. The Garden of Eden, was a place for God to just be with you.

You see, when we look at our story in the beginning, we find that when God created us He created us with a goal in mind. From Genesis to Revelation, God pursues us with an everlasting love. In other words, from cover to cover, from the beginning to the end, from start to finish, the Bible is a story about this God who loves you. It is about a God who created a prized possession who broke fellowship with God and then the rest of the story is this loving God pursuing this prized possession that He created, because He simply wants to have a relationship with us.

And folks, when you open the door of your heart to Christ and say, "Come on in" He does. The Bible says He actually takes up residence within us. It is what is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He comes in and fills you from the inside with His presence, and He then lives within us. This is better than Adam and Eve walking in the Garden with God. You might get to heaven and you might see Adam and Eve and you might say to them, "What was it like to walk in the Garden with God? What was that like?" Adam and Eve probably would look at you and say, "Who cares about walking in the Garden. I want to know what it was like for God to live within you; for you to have Him twenty-four-seven, every second of every minute of every day. What was that like?" You see, that is what happens when you open the door.

Here is how that relationship develops. God comes in and lives within us, and He speaks to us. God speaks to us in many ways. As you listen to the birds calling to one another, God speaks to you. As you marvel at God's creation, He speaks to you. As you see sights and hear sounds, God speaks. God sometimes speaks through a whisper in

your spirit. Do you realize how close God is to you? He is so close that you can hear the whisper of His love. But God says the most powerful way He speaks to us is through His Word. Why is that? Because that Book you hold in your hand, that you hold in your lap, that you treasure, is the very Word of God.

From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, and everything in between is the very Word of God. II Timothy 3:16 says "All scripture". How much of it? All of it. That means Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, all scripture is God breathed. The Greek word there is theopneustos. It means every word of that is the product of the mind of God. Yes, men wrote it down, but scripture tells us that as they wrote, God so superintended their writing, and so guided their writing that as they wrote, the end product was the very words that God wanted, right down to the very jot and tittle. Jot and tittle are the same accent mark in Hebrew that gives subtle meaning to words. When we open that Book, God speaks to us.

Folks, this is why you need every day to take in the Word of God. This is why you need to be here every weekend as we journey through the Book of Genesis, not to just be here one week and miss two. Be here one week, and miss one, you know. You need to be here every week. Why? Because every word of this Bible is the Word of God. That is why we go through verse by verse. What I have to say is at best inconsequential, is at best insignificant, but what God has to say in His Word is eternally mindful. There is no limit to the ways God speaks to you. Your part is to listen and pay attention.

The Bible invites us to talk to our Creator through prayer. Prayer sounds complicated, but it is very simple. It is you talking to your heavenly Father, telling Him what is on your heart, telling Him your struggles and your needs. He listens, because He cares for you. You can talk to God throughout the day. You don't have to be on your knees, hands folded, eyes closed. Hopefully you are not driving down I-95 with your eyes shut. A lot of people are sometimes. Just talk to Him! Just be always in the mode of thinking on God and talking to Him. Share the ride with the One who made the ride. Share your joys, fears, and sorrows, because no one cares like He does. We are created for a relationship with God. That is why He put us on this earth.

I'm so glad that when I bought this golf cart, Autumn didn't say: "Hey, Papa. Thanks for the golf cart, but I would rather not ride with you." That would break my heart, because I got the golf cart for us to share together. Yet, is that not what so many people do? "God, thanks for the earth. God, thanks for the air we breathe; God, thanks for the great food. God, thanks for all the stuff you have given me, and thanks for life, but God, I really don't want you with me." That is what He created us for. He so wants to share life with you.

For some of you who are believers, you are just “Thank you God that I get to have a relationship with you.” But for some of you, you don’t know what that is. What you are feeling right now is God knocking at the door of your heart. He is basically saying. “I want to come in, not to ruin your life, not to do religion, not to hang a lot of rules on you. I want to come in just to hang out with you, so we can do life together. Again, as intangible as that may seem, my prayer for you is that you are going to open the door.