

**Week 1 Participant: The Gardens of God**  
**Session 1: Week of March 9, 2025**  
**The Garden of Creation – Genesis 2:4b-10, 15-25**  
**Brewster Baptist Church**

**Connecting**

**\*If your group is gathering for the first time:**

1. Introduce yourself, & share: your name (see attached sheet to write down everyone's name to help you remember), what town you live in, how you heard about BBC and which worship service you attend.
2. Do you have any experience with gardening or growing things? If so, what do you enjoy about gardening?

**\*If you're in an ongoing group:**

1. Do you have any experience with gardening or growing flowers, plants, or food? If so, what do you enjoy about gardening?

As a group, take turns reading aloud the **Healthy Habits for a Small Group**. Whether your group is new or ongoing, it's a good idea to regularly be reminded of the habits and expectations that help groups thrive.

## Healthy Habits for a Small Group

**Come with 100% of yourself.** Each of us brings all of who we are to the group – our joys and successes, as well as our fears and failures.

**Presume welcome and extend welcome.** We all learn most effectively in spaces that welcome us. Know that you are welcome, that you belong, and extend this welcome to others.

**No fixing.** Offer advice or reflection to another person only when invited to do so, but otherwise avoid the temptation to fix, set-straight or counsel another member of the group.

**Share the air.** Pay attention to how much of the group time you take. Every voice is important, and no single voice ought to dominate.

**Speak for Self.** A helpful practice is to use “I” statements. This is a time to reflect on your own faith journey and not on someone else or “the world.”

**Pay attention to people, put your phones away : )**

**Listen to Silence.** Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. Allow silence to be another member of the group.

**Observe Confidentiality.** This is especially important for trust to develop. What’s said in the group stays in the group.

**Believe that it’s possible to emerge from this experience refreshed, surprised, and less burdened than when you came.** Expect that our time together can provide for renewal, refreshment, and helpful perspectives for our spiritual journeys.

## **Introduction to the Gardens of God**

The Bible is rich with imagery and symbolism, and gardens play a significant role in its narrative, reflecting themes of creation, love, betrayal, and redemption. Among the pivotal gardens mentioned in the Bible are the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Love in Song of Solomon, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of God in Revelation. For the next eight weeks, we're going to be spending time in the Gardens of God, starting with the first garden in the Bible.

The Garden of Eden, described in Genesis 2, is the first and most iconic garden in the Bible. It was a place of beauty, created by God as a dwelling place for God and humanity. The garden was filled with trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food, including the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:8-9). This garden symbolized a perfect relationship between God and humanity, where Adam and Eve lived in harmony with nature and with each other, free from sin and shame (Genesis 2:25).

Genesis 2:4b-10 and 15-25 offer a profound vision of God's intention for humanity, the earth, and our relationship with God. The Garden of Eden was more than a place; it was a declaration of God's love, God's purpose for creation, and desire for communion with humankind. Today, we'll explore the Garden of Creation, reflecting on its significance for us, and how its lessons about work, rest, relationship, and stewardship still resonate with us.

### **Genesis 2:4b-10, 15-25 (NRSV)**

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup> when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up — for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; <sup>6</sup> but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground — <sup>7</sup> then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. <sup>8</sup> And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> Out of the ground

the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. <sup>10</sup> A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.

<sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

<sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” <sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” <sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. <sup>21</sup> So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” <sup>24</sup> Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Remember, no one in the group is “the answer person,” the questions are for **the group** to wrestle with and discuss **together**.

## Questions

1. How does the description of humanity's creation in Genesis 2 shape your understanding of what it means to be human?
2. Why do you think God chose to create humans in such an intimate way (forming from dust and breathing life)?
3. What does Adam's role in naming the animals teach us about our responsibility toward creation?
4. How does the creation of Eve emphasize the importance of human relationships?
5. Why do you think God placed a restriction on eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What does this tell us about obedience?
6. In what ways does our culture challenge the idea of living under God's authority? How can we respond faithfully?

7. How can we better live out our purpose as stewards of creation in our daily lives?

### **Praying for Each Other**

**Are there any joys to celebrate, any burdens we can share?**

### **Closing Prayer**

## The Gardens of God: My Small Group

In case we need to contact each other regarding a change or transportation, etc.

My Small Group Host:

Address:

Name                      Phone                      Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name                      Phone                      Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name                      Phone                      Email \_\_\_\_\_

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