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## Gleanings

### Living Outside the Garden



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What if you had all the resources you needed to do what you really want to do in life? That would mean you did not need to be concerned with money, food, clothing, and shelter. Nor would you need to be concerned about wisdom and human resources. All these would be provided. All you would need to do would be to focus on finding and fulfilling God's purpose for your life. Sound too good to be true?

Adam and Eve had all of this in the Garden of Eden. They enjoyed an idyllic existence.

The weather was apparently perfect. If a canopy of water vapour surrounded the earth in its pre-fallen state, then it is possible that the temperature was essentially uniform, which would provide a perfect environment for man to live in without the need of clothes.

If dew watered the ground, there may have been no rain. And with a uniform climate there would have been no storms. Therefore there would have been no need of shelter.

There was an abundant food supply in the Garden of Eden. It appears that Adam and Eve were placed in a mature garden—one already bearing fruit. Because of the ideal climate, rich fertile soil, and daily moisture from dew, farming was easy. Furthermore, if the fall of man provides the explanation for plant-destroying insects, then in the pre-fallen state pesticides were not needed. Crops would never fail.

We don't know the size of the garden. It may have been large, but it did not encompass the whole earth. In Genesis 1:26–28, Adam and Eve were charged to multiply and take dominion of the earth. Presumably this meant they were to begin building the human race on earth in the context of the garden and to expand the garden.

As the human race grew, some people would be farmers, others ranchers or bakers or inventors or developers or mathematicians or scientists or engineers or financiers or economists. The scientists would seek to discover the timeless universal principles of the universe. The engineers would develop technology to support the dominion of the universe. This would require financial resources, which would be managed by financiers and economists using the gold supply of the garden (Genesis 2:11). Everyone would have a role to play.

Everything was in place for man to obey the Creation Mandate, but Adam and Eve chose to sin by seeking to be equal with God. This led to the fall of man. In his fallen state, man was not allowed to continue living in the garden but was still obligated to obey the Creation Mandate.

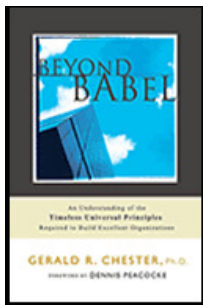
The fall apparently impacted the physical universe, including the weather and animal life. Consequently, the weather was no longer ideal, which required man to have clothes and shelter. And farming became more difficult. Part of the judgment for man's disobedience was that the ground would be cursed and bear thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17–18). Perhaps this is a metaphor suggesting that malfunctions—plant destroying insects, bad weather, and material defects—would make work difficult and less efficient than in the garden.

Now man had to expend time, energy, and resources just for the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. This redirected effort would surely slow down man's efforts to obey the Creation Mandate outside the necessities of mere existence.



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Man, however, was still charged to obey the Creation Mandate even though he was living outside the garden. This means that obedience to the Creation Mandate would be more difficult. Nevertheless, by considering the original design of man as a tenant in the garden we can still learn many lessons about how to function outside the garden.

Consider for example, the C4 principle (calling, character, capability, and commissioning) gleaned from man's original state in the garden.

- *Calling*: Adam and Eve did not create themselves nor were they the product of random impersonal forces. They were created sovereignly by God. They were created to serve the God's purposes not their own. God gave them revelation about his purposes, namely the Creation Mandate, and called them to the task of tending the garden.
- *Character*: Adam and Eve had an idyllic environment in which to fulfill the Creation Mandate. They were given one commandment. If they obeyed, they would enjoy life in a perfect context. If they disobeyed, they would be removed from the garden but remain under the Creation Mandate. In this state, obedience would be harder. In fact, perfect obedience would be impossible. Therefore, the power to enable man to obey the Creation Mandate could not come from man; it must come from the Redeemer, Christ. To maximize a person's potential to obey the Creation Mandate, he or she must be redeemed by Christ and mature in God-empowered righteousness.
- *Capability*: Adam was created in God's image. This means he was given some divine attributes. For example, man can display love, compassion, kindness, foresight, rationality, and creativity. These attributes were given to man so he could fulfill his purpose of obeying the Creation Mandate. In addition, Adam was given a partner—Eve—to help him. Because Eve came from Adam, she possessed his attributes, including his calling to obey the Creation Mandate.
- *Commissioning*: As created beings, Adam and Eve were not self-commissioned. Commissioning is the work of authority figures. The Creator alone had the authority to commission them. His commissioning included a directive (the Creation Mandate), a context (the Garden of Eden), and a commandment. Adam and Eve knew who they were, why they were created, what they were to do, how they were to do it, and where they were to do it. Understanding all this came through the Creator's commissioning.

Adam and Eve possessed C4 to do what they were created to do, namely, to fulfill their roles in the Creation Mandate. Every human being is a descendant of Adam and Eve, therefore all humans possess the same traits as Adam and Eve and are under the same mandate—the Creation Mandate. Hence, since Adam and Eve possessed C4 to fulfill their purpose, so do their descendants.

Adam and Eve disobeyed their one commandment and that led to the fall. The penalty was death, which included immediate spiritual death (a bias to sin), ultimate physical death, and immediate removal from the garden. As fallen beings, their bias to sin impaired their ability to obey the Creation Mandate, which means they needed divine enablement to obey.

As their descendants, we live in this same state—outside the garden. Therefore we need divine enablement—the redemption from our fallen state—to fulfill the Creation Mandate. So we need Christ not only to gain eternal life but also to enable us to fulfill our divinely ordained purpose in this life. Without Christ, we will suffer eternal judgment and fail to realize our potential in the divine meta-narrative. Only in Christ are we granted acceptance with God and empowered to walk in our C4 destiny, and therefore fulfill our purpose in the Creation Mandate. May the Lord grant us the grace to receive redemption in Christ so we can be empowered to live as his obedient servants both now and in eternity.

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