

Life
After
Eden

When SIN Left Us Naked

Heather Thompson Day
Seth Michael Day



Pacific Press®
Publishing Association

Nampa, Idaho | Oshawa, Ontario, Canada
www.pacificpress.com

Day 1 — Heather

In the Beginning . . .

Absolute nakedness was intrusive, confusing to the senses.

Paradoxically, it both revealed and diminished identity.

—P. D. James

Sometimes I wonder what Eden must have been like.

When I was a kid, I started writing a book from Adam's perspective. It opened with Adam taking his first breath of cold and yet soothing air. It filled his lungs, never burned them. It depicted a perfect man walking in a perfect Eden, feeling overwhelmed by the sounds, the smells, the beauty. What do you think the sky looked like in Eden? I wonder if it was blue, or a myriad different colors all bursting from the seams at the same time. Maybe that is why God made His promise with Noah that He would never flood the earth again by flashing a rainbow. Perhaps it was a reminder of Eden, and a promise that one day they'd be able to see the colors they'd been told about. It's possible, isn't it? I bet birds and crickets literally sang like the New York Mass Choir. I bet when Adam first saw Eve, he cried.

I wonder what Eve looked like—the perfect woman. Maybe she was a blond. Perhaps that is why my entire childhood was filled with daydreaming about dying my brown hair blond, showing up at school the next day, and making all the boys fall backward in their chairs. Or maybe Eve was a brunette. Maybe she had the long, perfect, thick, wavy dark hair that only beautiful foreign models put brushes in. I bet her breasts were perfect. I bet her thighs were toned with slight hints of athletic muscle that she

Life *After* Eden

never had to work for. I bet her teeth were white, but not the type of white that we know, a glorious, holy white. I wonder if her smile was mischievous, if one grin toward Adam made him beg her for more. I wonder if he ever held her close to his side while watching stars at night. If they talked about plans and dreams while watching stars dance across the sky. I have a feeling that in Eden, they never made a wish, because everything they could ever want was shimmering right before them.

And then, they sinned and they discovered their nakedness. I can assure you that there were nights that Adam woke up screaming. I can see him ripping open his once-protected eyes and crying. I bet the first time he gulped air on a bitterly cold day and felt it burn his lungs, he sobbed. I can just see him beating his chest when leaves fell from trees and flowers withered. I bet faded leaves looked a lot like the jaded world he was living in. I bet Adam wanted to die long before his head fell to the grave. I wonder if Adam was the first person to ever contemplate suicide? Here, this perfect man is the father of the world's first murderer, Cain. I wonder if Adam could even fathom murder, if he just kept shaking his head, trying to make the logic add up but it never did. I wonder if Adam and Eve blamed themselves for what happened to Abel.

After the Fall, after swallowing that large lump of sin that never did quite seem to go down, I bet Adam and Eve fought. I bet they went to bed many nights not speaking. I bet she whimpered softly into her pillow, and he pretended not to hear her. I bet he tried touching her side in the middle of the night and she rolled closer to the wall. I bet there were moments when Adam and Eve couldn't look at each other without feeling anger. I wonder if they had flashbacks to nights in Eden, laughing, and staring at dancing stars; and when they came back to reality, tiny pieces of their hearts died, slowly. I bet they missed the small things the most. The birds that sounded like flutes, the banjo of the crickets, the warmth of a perfect wind. I bet they missed the color white. I bet they'd be horrified to see how much we cling to life after naked.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:1–3). I often have to remind myself

In the Beginning . . .

of the first few lines in Genesis—it is where I draw my strength.

As I sat down at the computer in my office, I shifted to face the beautiful window that stares out onto the college campus where I am a faculty member. The sign on my door confirms that. My job is to take unbridled young minds and try my hardest to transform them. My favorite quote on education essentially says that it is our (the instructors') purpose to turn mirrors into windows. Mirrors reflect our own thoughts, perspectives, and ideologies. Windows open us to the rest of the world. My job is to take a generation of social-media zombies and get them to stop thinking about their next 140-character tweet long enough to realize that there is a whole world out there—and they are not the center of it.

This adult generation is searching for something. We are the most medicated, intoxicated, overweight adult cohort in US history. The epidemic that ails the population today, which claims to be connected, is a dire feeling of loneliness. We have rewired our brains to think that we have to share in order to be human. Long gone are the days of deep personal thought and self-examination. Now we share publicly in order to feel alive. We must always be connected, and yet many of us feel alone. In every head focused on a cell phone screen during dinner, I see a walking mirror. A generation with headphones on hand at all times, because—how could we ever take the time to actually listen to someone? And so we are connected, and yet we are lonely.

So today, I faced my window. I wanted to write something hopeful for you, and so I shifted my position. I can see the campus ablaze with students walking to and from their classes. Hundreds of different perspectives and life stories are an arm's reach away. Windows change the way I write and the way I think. If only we lived in a world filled with windows.

When I got to my computer, however, I saw I had seventeen new emails, which was hardly daunting since I usually have about fifty every time I log on. “Mrs. Day, did we do anything in class yesterday?” Um. Delete.

“Hey professor, I was sick, so yesterday was an excused absence, right?” My shoulders droop.

“Professor, I have to leave class early tomorrow. I am really sad about it though because I think we are discussing love styles, right? I really wanted to know about that.” Things are looking up.

Life *After* Eden

Then my eyes hit the next message. It was a student who had not been in class all week. She had emailed me the previous Sunday. Her father had called her because her mother had a seizure. She ran as fast as she could. When she got there, her mother was awake but rambling a few strange things that she did not think made sense. She took her to the ER. Within twenty-four hours, she learned that her once-healthy mother had aggressive stage 4 breast cancer.

“We are going to fight this,” she said as her closing thoughts before hitting “Send.” Only four days later, her mother died. Her cancer had apparently spread to her brain—she had eight tumors. Her family had no idea she was even sick. In fact, five days earlier, they had discussed the Thanksgiving menu. And then they had to force themselves to acknowledge funeral preparations.

This is our world. Like it or not, this is the world in which we live. A once-perfect and tranquil Eden became devoured by sin, and the light that God originally spoke into existence has been growing dimmer ever since. In the aftermath of sin, we have been left naked. We, who were once robed in the glory of God, are naked.

It’s dark and it’s cold, and our hands fumble for something to fix it. Botox? Maybe that will help us feel better about ourselves. Alcohol? Surely that bottle will warm our freezing tongues. Anxiety and depression medication. Surely these pills will make us less numb. Food? Perhaps if we just feed our bellies more rich, exotic, or succulent foods, maybe then we will be able to feel less . . . well . . . naked. And so the cycle starts and has reached astronomical rates. Combine all this with the crucial human dilemma that we are excruciatingly lonely, and you have a concoction that is enough to kill most people.

I watch a lot of prison shows. I am slightly obsessed with the ethical treatment of forgotten members of society. I used to think that there were just good and bad people, but now I think there are just broken people who make bad choices and wind up worse off than the rest of us. We are all naked. All of us. We tend to focus on the delinquents of society and point the finger at them, but we are all to blame. Our thoughts are perverse, and our words divide. Everyone is out for themselves, and many times it is hard to find examples of compassion in a world that is so cold.

In the Beginning . . .

Sometimes I get bogged down by the emptiness or the brokenness I see, and that's when I have to reread Genesis 1:1–3. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, *‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.*”

Think about the greatest sunset you have ever seen, or the most serene ocean wave. God spoke that into existence. That is how powerful God is. Just the sheer sound of His voice sends atoms into alignment. The vibration of His vocal cords is packed so full with power and energy that molecules go into a frenzy at the very command of His whisper. God speaks four words, and the laws of nature literally bend themselves to obey the curve in His syllables. He is so big that just four words bring something where there was nothing.

What scene of brilliance do you believe He could speak into your life? His voice alone is magnificent enough to bring millions of galaxies into existence. What do you think could happen when He says your name? Don't underestimate what one touch from the hand of God can do to your naked body. You are His, and that is the one thing about living in this world that makes dreaming even possible. Yes we are naked; yes, there is darkness; yes, this is not our home; but the vibrato of His voice can and will restore.

His first call to action was to bring about a light that would literally make darkness hide. Can you imagine how bright that first day in Eden must have been? I would assume that whatever we consider brightness now was nothing compared to Eden. God called for light, and darkness ran. I think it is also interesting to mention that God is often synonymous with light.

First John 1:5 says, “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”

First Timothy 6:16 says, “Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”

God is light, and I believe that when He first spoke light into this world, He was also making us a promise: *where light is, there I am also*. Never forget that. If you ever think, *Surely this situation is so dark that God is*

Life *After* Eden

nowhere to be seen, just look toward the Son. He is still here. In the midst of a dimming world, light can still be found. Every morning when I see the sun rise, I am reminded that God is still with us. Our world is crumbling, we are naked and afraid, but He is still with us.

Satan has worked tirelessly to attack the very first words God ever spoke on this planet. But God is not a liar. What He speaks will be done. He has already given the command, “Let there be light,” and so there will be light. As Satan works feverishly to destroy this globe, cling tight to the hope of restoration.

Throughout the rest of this book, my husband and I will share with you some of our personal stories. I am a communications expert, author, speaker, Christian, mother, wife, and teacher. I am also undeniably naked. My students often say to me, “Your life seems perfect.” I wish I could tell my secular classroom that my God is perfect, but my life is anything but. My life is filled with regret, pain, shame, and embarrassment. I have known humiliation, and poverty; I have kissed betrayal, and heartbreak. My life is but a filthy rag sewn to worn-out skin. I, like everyone else, am trying desperately to keep it together, while the world around me seems to be falling apart.

As you go through this journey with my husband and me, I want you to keep in mind: this world is dark, but God needs you to shine bright. This world is unfair—He knows that. It is the cost of sin. It is the aftermath of nakedness. Satan wants you to give up; he wants you to feel as though God is not enough and that there are more fulfilling options than the Cross. He is a liar. John 8:44 tells us, “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Satan is living in a world of blackness, and he is busy snuffing out lamps as he roves around like a roaring lion. He is a walking dead man, hoping you will become so enamored in darkness that you forget what God has promised in the very first lines of Genesis. He is hoping to infect you with darkness.

I posted on Facebook about my student, her mother, and the gloom of cancer. I said how my heart ached to see Jesus come. “This is NOT our home,” I wrote.

In the Beginning . . .

My friend Candace read that status and replied, “We can do something in spite of darkness—we can pray. We can pray so hard that tiny beads of light rip through dark walls.”

I agree with her. My Bible is filled with saints from before, who have achieved the impossible by claiming the glory of heaven. Joseph, a slave, became a ruler in Egypt; Moses, a runaway, divided the Red Sea; and Peter, a fisherman, walked on water. It was not by their own might that they did these things; for they, like us, were naked. *But something miraculous always happens when people grab hold of the robe of Jesus. He covers them.*

My prayer is that every person reading this book gets filled with God’s unapproachable light. I am praying for you as your eyes dance across this page. I am praying because the harvest is plenty but the workers are few. I am begging God to surround you with shafts of His light so that you may never be the same. May we start a fire that blazes across this planet and brings our Savior back. May what happened in Genesis be fulfilled because we are here.

Despite our nakedness, there is one truth that we must hold on to until the evening that Jesus comes. The echo of God’s voice in Eden can still be heard today. In the midst of darkness, let there be light! He is still with us. You are His light to a fallen world. May we struggle to stand in the beams of heaven. May we find purpose and meaning in life after Eden.

Life *After* Eden

Share the Naked Truth:

1. What was the last experience you went through in which you saw God's "light" (presence) clearly in your life?
2. In what areas of your life do you feel the most naked?
3. In 140 characters, describe the most painful difference between our world and Eden. Tweet/Facebook us *@InLifeAfterEden*.
4. Or Instagram us a photo of your favorite highlighted quote from this reading.