



ELIMMISSIONS

## SMALL GROUP LEADERS NOTES: Mission and the Story of God – week 2

This week you are going to build on the Creation narrative, in which we discovered a magnificent picture of what life, and the world, is intended to resemble. We witnessed an authentic and love-filled friendship between God and his creation, capped off with the creation of humanity. Humans are made for a unique relationship with the creator God, but because of one act of rebellion, this relationship was changed forever. The Creation narrative is so important for understanding the mission heart of God, because without it, the rest of the story makes no sense! Yet often in our evangelism, we start the conversation with sin and the fall without first painting a picture of the life we were designed to live; but lost because of human rebellion against God's rule.

This week I want you to explore the implications of the first rebellion against God. **What signs do you see that God already had a plan to rescue his creation? Focus on why this is so important for the mission to God.**

**RECAP:** Last week we looked at Act 1 of the Story of God – CREATION – what were some of the things that have stuck with you since then about this part of the story and how has it influenced your life this week?

**THIS WEEK:** Read Act 2 – REBELLION. Use the four base questions from last week to frame your discussion and identify an action to take during the following week.

- 1) Who is God?
- 2) What has God done?
- 3) Who am I?
- 4) How do we get to live?

### **REBELLION (SHARE OUT THE READING OF THIS STORY):**

One day a deceitful, lying serpent approached Eve and asked her a question. He asked, "Did God really say you couldn't eat of any of the fruit in this garden?" Eve told him, "No, that's not what God said. We can eat from any tree in the garden. It's only the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that we are not allowed to eat from—or even touch—or we will definitely die."

The serpent lied to Eve and said, "You won't die! God just knows that as soon as you eat from that tree, your eyes will be opened, and you will become just like Him. You will be able to determine what is right and wrong for yourselves."

"Hmm. I would be able to decide what is right and wrong?" Eve thought. She looked at the delicious fruit, contemplating the decision, and she believed the lies of the serpent over the words of the good God. She reached out her hand and ate some of the fruit. Then she gave some to her husband, Adam, who decided to eat as well. In that moment their eyes were opened, and they were flooded with guilt and shame. They quickly tied fig leaves together to cover up their nakedness. They had rebelled and

chosen to live outside the good reign of God, immediately experiencing the devastating effects of that choice.

Later that day, Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden as He always did that time of day. When they heard Him, their shame caused them to try to hide behind some of the nearby bushes. God called out to them, "Adam, where are you?" Ashamed, Adam answered, "I heard you coming, and I was afraid because I was naked." God asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit I told you not to?" Adam replied to God, "It was the woman that you gave to me—she handed me the fruit." Then God said to Eve, "How could you do this?" Eve said, "The serpent tricked me into eating the fruit." So God spoke to the serpent, "You are cursed because you have done this. You will now be the enemy of the woman and her offspring. You will bite at his heels, but he will crush your head!"

Then God turned to Adam and Eve. He knew His good creation would be drastically affected by their choice to live outside His good reign. He knew they would be subjected to sickness, pain, suffering, and even death because of their decisions. As He is just and good and cannot allow injustice or rebellion to remain in His presence forever, He had to punish them for their rebellion.

He told them the consequences of their sin:

- Women will have great pain in bearing children.
- Men will struggle, toil, and sweat while trying to cultivate the land—only to get a little bit of food from it.
- They would both struggle for power in their relationship.
- They would die and return to the dust from which they were formed.

Even though He punished them with the consequences for their rebellion, God still loved and provided for them. He gave them clothes made from the skins of animals they had previously named and cared for.

God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden and then sent mighty warrior angels to guard its entrance so they would not be able to re-enter it. He also put a flaming sword in place to guard the Tree of Life, so people could no longer eat from it. God's good creation was now a drastically different place, twisted and distorted from how He had made it.

Now, what you have to understand is that the story doesn't end with the rebellion in the garden. Like any good story, there is hope. The hope of this story lies in the promise that God is still on His mission. In the midst of the realization that all of creation was now under a curse, Adam and Eve held onto the promise that the good God would someday crush the serpent through one of their descendants - a Victor had been promised.

After the disaster in the garden, the rebellion continued to manifest itself. Adam and Eve had two sons. One murdered the other! It got so bad that at one-point, God looked at the people of the earth and saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil. He decided to send a great flood over the entire earth to wipe out this rebellion and wickedness. However, God was still on mission.

He didn't wipe out every single human; Noah and his family were rescued from the flood. After the water subsided, God put a rainbow in the sky and covenanted with Noah that He would never again destroy the earth.

You might think Noah's descendants figured it out and started loving and following God, but the rebellion ran deep. Pride dominated the world. The people came together to build a tower to heaven to make a name for themselves and to avoid doing their job of spreading out, caring for all of God's creation.

Rather than letting them have their prideful way, God was gracious to them and dispersed them across the earth by confusing their language. But God was still on His mission.

**RETELL THE STORY:** Retell the story as a group, see if you can retell the events of this story in the order they happened.

**DIALOGUE:**

This is a dialogue, not a quiz or a monologue. This is not asking one person all the questions to get their answers - Use the 4 questions to help lead your discussions and stay within this part of the story, and seek to relate this to your life and your experiences:

**Observe:** WHO IS GOD?

**Reflect:** WHAT HAS GOD DONE?

**Discuss:** WHO ARE WE?

**Act:** HOW DO WE GET TO LIVE?

To help your discussion on the above questions there are some discussion starters below:

1. What did Adam and Eve choose to do in the story? How has this same choice played out in our story?
2. What was the real temptation Adam and Eve were presented with by the serpent?
3. Do you think God didn't know where they were? Why did He go looking and asking questions? Why didn't God just overlook their rebellion?
4. Where do you see God's grace in this story?
5. It said all of creation experienced consequences for their sin. As you look around the world today, where do you see these effects?
6. Why were Noah and his family spared? What does it mean to be "blameless"? Was Noah sinless?
7. From this story, how does God feel about humans?
8. What does you learn about the Mission of God from the rescues God performs in this Act? How does this inform your approach to mission?

**RESPONSE:** Reread the story this week and as you do share with each other via your chat how this story is impacting your life this week – who God is, what God has done, who we are and how we get to live.