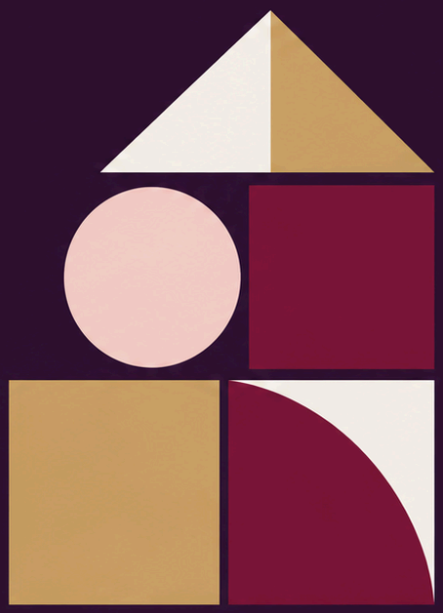
BIBLE STUDY

Building Blocks



RESONATE

Building Blocks: Adam Lost a Rib

The formation of the cosmos. The beginning of time. The formation of sky, sea, land, vegetation, animals. The image of God through man. Creation. Where our beliefs begin.

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:18-21

Genesis 1:1

> 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Verse 1: In the Word of God the first thing we learn about God is that He created the heavens and the earth. We do not learn about His love first. Instead, we learn about His power. Why would He choose to reveal Himself this way? It testifies about Himself even to those who do not have the Word.

Romans 1:18-21

> 18The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
>
> 21For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Verse 18-21: The “proof” of God is creation. While scientist do all they can to say that there is no God, the evidence of the Lord is seen all about us. Everything about us shows the “eternal power and divine nature” of our God. These two attributes are what He first wants us to understand about Him.

I am about to make a poor illustration. But I want you to think about the superheroes that children look up to. I know a child who has spiderman plastered all over his room. What attracts this little boy to spiderman? If you ask him he would say, “It is so cool how he can climb walls and beat the bad guys!” He has a power (climb walls) and a nature (good, compared to the bad guys). That attracts the boy to him. God is the superhero of the universe. He wants to attract our imagination. His power created the universe! No power can top that. His nature is divine. It is “other”. It is not of this world. It is “other” worldly. It is above us.

Yet this power and nature which is beyond us decided to create us! Imagine the girl at the end of every action movie. She has been rescued from danger by the superhero. She appreciates him and is in awe of what he did for her. How much more awe should the God who formed us receive? His “superpower” allows for our very existence.

The first sentence of the Word of God is meant to capture our hearts, our minds, our imaginations. It is to be “wowed” by the Lord. Sometimes we read these words without the wonder they should evoke. But think like a child. They get so excited at zoos. They love the animals. The toddler will point out a tree with glee. Mountains are amazing the way they keep going into the sky. Clouds moved by the wind are fun to watch. Some of babies first words are animal names. They understand the amazement of creation.

We are the children of God. Whether we are eight or eighty, God wrote the Word with children in mind. He wants us to be captured by the wonder of it all. Read it again.

Genesis 1:1

> 1In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Verse 1: This time, do not let it just be words on a page. Instead, have your sense of wonder aroused. Your God, Your Hero, made the heavens and the earth.

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Praise God for His eternal power and divine nature.

Spend time pondering Genesis 1:1. If possible go outside and view nature. Afterwards, write down your thoughts about the revelation of God through His creation.

How can the sense of awe and wonder about the power of God be revived in our hearts?

DAY 2

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:1, 2:4-15; Ephesians 2:28, 6:5-8; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

God’s creative work lasted six days. Read the account of all He did.

Genesis 1:1-2:1

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." 7So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. 8God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

11Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, 15and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." 21So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

1Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

Verse 1-1: God had worked six days in creating the earth. His crowning achievement was when He created man. For there was a special purpose in this creation, he was made in the image of God. Part of reflecting that image is working as God is working. God created the earth. God created man. He joined the two of them together through work.

Genesis 2:4-15

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens- 5 and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, 6 but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground- 7 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.

8Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. 11The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) 13The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Verse 4-15: God had worked six days in creating the earth. Man was not created to lounge around and just enjoy the benefits of this creation. Instead, Adam was to labor. This is the Garden of Eden, before the curse of the ground. There were no thorns or thistles. However, work was involved. It was divinely appointed. God Himself put Adam over caring for the garden.

We live in a day and age where work is not appreciated. Most people work only to receive a paycheck. Many long to be rich so that they do not have to work. Retirement is looked forward to so that work is no longer needed. Some people refuse to work and instead receive benefits from others in society who do work. Our culture has formed the idea that work is “bad” and days off are “good”. The slogan is T.G.I.F. not T.G.I.M. (Thank God it’s Monday).

Work was created by God. When we work, we are reflecting His work ethic. He calls work “good”. It is those who do not work who are rebuked by the Lord.

Ephesians 4:28

28He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Verse 28: “Stealing” in this verse refers to taking something you do not earn. This is beyond shoplifting but also getting money without laboring for it. We are called to work. Our work is not just so that we can get a paycheck. Instead, our wages are to care for our needs as well as the needs of others.

This shows us the heart of work. Our work is not to “get ahead in this world”. It should not be motivated to have a more expensive vacation. To have the latest technology, biggest house, or newest car is not the purpose either. Instead our work reflects God. He worked to provide for us. Our work should have the desire to provide for others.

Not working is detrimental not only to ourselves but also to others.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

> 10For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."
>
> 11We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.
> 12Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

Verse 10-12: Lack of working proves an undisciplined life. It shows that a person has no self-control. Also, it leads to creating havoc for others.

Some of you have tuned this Bible study out. You have a job so you think you are working. However, remember this. Our work is beyond going to a job but doing a good job.

Ephesians 6:5-8

> 5Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

Verse 5-8: You are to perform well at work. Whether the boss is watching you or not, your work should be of the highest quality. For you have a greater purpose in your work than an unbeliever. They work for the money. You work for God Himself, the creator of work.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to represent His work ethic in whatever you do.

How can we begin viewing work as good?

Often we feel like work keeps us away from spending time with God. Yet, the Lord created us for work. So, how can work draw us closer to the Lord?

In what ways can your income benefit the need of others?

How do you need to change your work habits so that you are performing the best job possible for your employer as well as for your Lord?

DAY 3

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 2:16-24, 3:1-7; Luke 2:4-7; Romans 5:12, 17-21; Revelation 19:7-8; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22; John 8:44

We are going to embark on a journey of symbolism. Through Scripture we are going to connect the first Adam with the second Adam. This will enable us to understand the plan of God for salvation before the world began.

Genesis 2:18-24

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Verse 18-24: Adam was surrounded by animals. His parent, God Himself, was there as well. Adam was just beginning life, having been formed by the hand of God. Thousands of years later, the second Adam would experience some of the same things.

Luke 2:4-7

4So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Verse 4-7: Jesus, formed by God Himself in the womb of Mary, was just beginning life. He was born in a barn surrounded by animals. His parents were there. The second Adam had entered the world.

Not only were there beginnings similar, they also shared a world-wide responsibility. Both Adam and Jesus were given tasks that would affect everyone. The first Adam failed his task, the second Adam redeemed the first.

Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-7

> 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."...
>
> 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
>
> 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "
>
> 4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
>
> 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Verse 16-17, 1-7: The one thing that Adam was told not to do, he did. Thus, sin entered the world. Everyone born of Adam would be born with a sin nature.

Romans 5:12

> 12Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Verse 12: Adam’s sin caused a plague to enter the world. Only perfection could stop what he began. The second Adam gives us the opportunity for eternal life.

Romans 5:17-21

17For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

18Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 17-21: Whereas the first Adam sinned, the second Adam was perfect. Through Jesus we can have eternal life. The picture of this redemption is found back in Genesis.

Genesis 2:21-22

21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Verse 21-22: From the deep sleep of Adam, woman was formed. Throughout the Word of God, the people of God are referred to in a feminine sense. The ultimate example of this is found in Revelation.

Revelation 19:7-8

7Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Verse 7-8: The bride is the church. Where did the church come from? Just as Eve was formed out of the deep sleep of Adam, the church came from the “deep sleep” (literally death) of Jesus. The deep sleep of Adam produced life for Eve. The death of Jesus produced eternal life for the church.

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

20But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Verse 20-22: The first Adam brought physical life and also physical death. The second Adam brought spiritual life that lasts for eternity! All of us have been born of the first Adam. But we must choose to be born of the second Adam. It is a choice, just as the choice of whom to marry.

Genesis 2:24

> 24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Verse 24: In the physical world, we choose to leave our parents and marry the person of our choice. The same is true spiritually. Before you choose the Lord, your parent is satan.

John 8:44

> 44You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. 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.

Verse 44: You must choose to leave the evil one and marry your righteous Husband, Jesus Christ. The decision is yours.

Adam and Eve illustrate the beauty between Christ and His church. Is the symbolism a reality in your life?

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Praise the second Adam whose death birthed in you eternal life.

What did you learn about the first and second Adam?

Why is it important to understand the connection between Adam and Jesus?

How do we leave our father (satan) and be joined together with Jesus?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11, 35:2, 34:21

What comes to mind when you hear the word "rest"? Do you think of a day off, or maybe a long nap, or just having a time of peace and quiet? The Word of God teaches the true meaning of rest. God Himself is the example for us.

Genesis 2:1-3

> 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.
>
> 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Verse 1-3: God had worked six days creating the earth. The first thing that we learn about rest is that it is only justified if you work. True rest is appreciated if you labor on the other days. If you are lazy throughout the week, then you will not understand true rest. Rest is a time of taking time off from the work that you do.

Another truth that we can learn about rest is that it is sanctified. In other words, the day has been "set apart". This day has been made holy by the Lord. In fact, it is a command for us to follow.

Exodus 20:8-11

> 8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Verse 8-11: God is serious about this day of rest. I am going to be blunt: if you refuse to take a day of rest, you are sinning against the Lord. He created a day of rest for us. He did not need the rest, the Lord God Almighty never needs it. Instead, He set an example for us. We need to rest. We need time to recover from our week. We need time to get our priorities back in order.

While not taking time to rest is a sin, so is abusing the day of rest. We are not to justify our rest as “vacation” or “shopping” or “time to run our errands”. True rest does not encompass any of these things. True rest is spiritual in nature. When God rested, He reflected on the creative work that He had accomplished. Our time of rest is to take time to reflect on the work that God has allowed us to complete that week. It is to appreciate the fact that He has enabled us to do whatever it is that we did. We are to give Him praise and honor for the work that He did through us. Rest has a divine purpose. It is to draw our hearts and minds back to the Creator. During the week our lives get distracted by deadlines, appointments, rehearsals, practices, projects, meetings, and so much more. Rest brings us back to God, to remind us that every event during our week should have an eternal purpose. It is to thank Him for all He has done for us that week.

In our days of busy lives, we forget the importance of this command. We do not take it seriously. But God does.

Exodus 35:2

> 2 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death.

Verse 2: Lack of rest is a serious offense to God. Please understand that God created rest for you. It is something that is good for both your physical and spiritual health. But it is not something to be overlooked, even during hectic times of our lives.

Exodus 34:21

> 21 "Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.

Verse 21: We are without excuse. We were made to rest. The gift of rest has been given to us. We need to accept it each week.

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to honor a day of rest.

What is the biblical understanding of “rest”. How did it differ from your thoughts on it?

What is the value of this time of rest?

How can you begin having a time of rest each week?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 1:28; Ephesians 3:14; John 3:1-8; Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 7:9-10

Adam and Eve together were given a huge task: to populate the earth!

Genesis 1:28

> 28God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Verse 28: The Lord created the family. The idea of parents with children originated with Him. He enjoys family life for He Himself fulfills the role of a Father.

Ephesians 3:14

> 14For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Verse 14: How do we derive the name of God? We must accept Him as our Father. Then, we are born of Him.

John 3:1-8

> 1Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."
>
> 3In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."
>
> 4"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"
>
> 5Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Verse 1-8: When we are born of God then we are given a similar task as Adam and Eve. They were to expand the physical population of the earth. We are called to expand the spiritual population of the earth.

Matthew 28:18-20

> 18Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Verse 18-20: On the authority of Jesus Christ, we have been commissioned to tell others how they may be born into the kingdom of God. Then, the family of God will grow throughout the earth!

Revelation 7:9-10

> 9After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to fulfill the “great commission” of telling others how they may be born again.

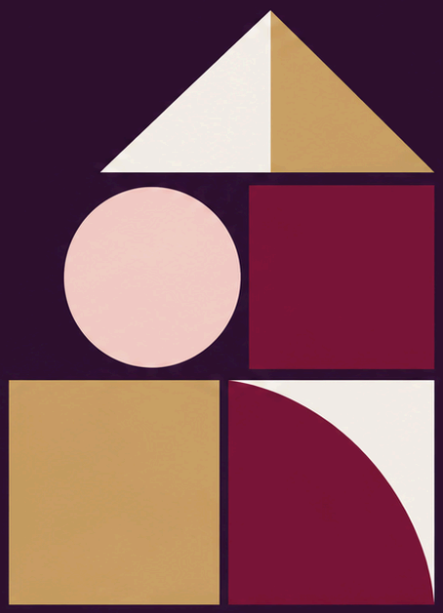
Who are some people with whom you have shared how they might become children of God?

Who are you praying for that needs to become born of God?

What role can you play in helping others discover their need to be “born again”?

BIBLE STUDY

Building Blocks



RESONATE

Building Blocks: Bad Bite

Sin. We have all committed it. All of us are under the condemnation of it. For the wages of sin is death. It is not the easiest topic to approach but a vital one for our awareness and understanding. We need to be aware of the potential to sin and understand the cost to our Lord to keep us from the eternal penalty of sin.

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 3:1-6

Sin is tragic. The beginning of sin is the biggest tragedy of all. Imagine having lived time in perfection and then experiencing the loss of your innocence, the loss of your relationship with others, and the loss of your relationship with God. Adam and Eve went from paradise to being cursed because of one bad bite.

Genesis 3:1-6

> 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
>
> 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "
>
> 4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
>
> 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Verse 1-6: We will be breaking up this story, but I wanted you to get the full picture of what happened. As we study this passage, I want us to look beyond Adam and Eve to see ourselves. How do we carry on the sin cycle that began that day? How can we learn from their mistake so that we may make righteous choices in the future? First of all, we must recognize the enemy.

Genesis 3:1

> 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Verse 1: The serpent invaded the garden. Why was he allowed to stay? Before the serpent spoke, Adam could have exercised his authority to have the enemy removed. Adam was given the responsibility to care of the garden. He should have made sure the “garbage” was

taken out!

Genesis 2:15

> 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Verse 15: Adam was responsible to cultivate the garden. God had given him authority over it.

Genesis 1:28

> 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Verse 28: If Adam had the authority over every living thing, then he could have told the serpent to go and the serpent would have had to go. But he did not use the authority he had, thus he did not uphold his responsibility before God. This opened the door for the enemy to attack. We, too, have authority over the enemy but we must choose to use it.

James 4:7

> 7Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Verse 7: Adam was called to care for the garden; we are called to live for God. All of us are to submit to God in our calling. Submitting to God requires us to resist the enemy for we can only submit to one master. The enemy will then leave. If Adam had submitted to God in caring for the garden, the enemy would have fled. Unfortunately, Adam did not carry out his responsibility before God and the enemy came into the garden. Once the enemy had access to the people, he began working a devious plan.

Genesis 3:1-5

> 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
>
> 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "
>
> 4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Verse 1-5: The question here is, “Why is she talking to him?” Eve does not need to justify, rationalize, or draw conclusions with the enemy. He draws her into a debate and then confuses her reasoning. Satan is known as the “accuser of the brethren”. He wants to bring charges against us. He is a lawyer who wants to condemn everyone. This makes him a slick debater. Do not try to wrestle with him with your words. He will win. The only word that you need is the name of Jesus. For He alone is greater than the evil one of this world. When you take on the enemy with your own power and wisdom, you will fail.

Genesis 3:6

> 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Verse 6: She had probably passed this tree a hundred times. But with the help of the enemy, she viewed it differently. What once did not matter to her all of a sudden became an all-consuming passion. The enemy got her with the same things he gets us:

1 John 2:15-16

> 15Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Verse 15-16: Lust of the flesh: “Tree was good for food” Lust of the eyes: “Delight to the eyes” Boastful pride of life: “Desirable to make one wise”

The same tricks the enemy used in the garden, he uses today. Be on your guard.

1 Peter 5:8

> 8Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Verse 8: Beware. He wants to devour you. Resist him by submitting every part of your life to God.

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord if there is anything that you need to submit to Him. Ask for His help in resisting the attacks of the enemy.

What area of your life is prone to attacks by the enemy?

In what areas are you the most vulnerable: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or boastful pride of life?

Based on the area that you are most likely to be attacked, in what way do you need to submit to God?

DAY 2

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 3:6-13, 16-19, 22-24; 1 John 1:5-9

Sin always has consequences. We never get away with sin. In one way or another, we will bear the burden of our actions. Adam and Eve were the first to experience this bitter reality.

Genesis 3:6-7

> 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Verse 6-7: The first consequence for their sin was a loss of innocence. They were pure, now impure. They were righteous, now corrupt. They were holy, now defiled. In a futile attempt, they tried to cover themselves with sewed leaves. Their covering was inadequate, for when God came, they hid.

Genesis 3:8-10

> 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"
>
> 10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

Verse 8-10: Another consequence to sin is having our relationship with God broken. Adam and Eve had enjoyed sweet fellowship with their Creator. They would walk with Him in the garden. Yet, after sin, they hid from Him. How often that is true today. We sin, so we hide from God: avoid Bible study, quit coming to church, stop praying, or abandon Christian friends. We hide just like Adam and Eve. It breaks the heart of God.

I think the question of God is being said to us today. "Where are you?" God knew where they were, hiding in the garden. He was not referring to their physical location but their spiritual one. Before, they had shared fellowship, now the relationship was severed. The same can happen to us.

1 John 1:5-7

> 5This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Verse 5-7: Are you walking with God? If so, then you are in the light; you are not hiding in darkness. You can claim to be in the light even if you are not. You may fool others, but God knows. He is asking, “Where are you?” If you are hiding from God because of sin, there is only one remedy. You must confess it.

1 John 1:8-9

> 8If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Verse 8-9: Confession gets us out of hiding, out of the darkness, and brings us back to fellowship with the Light. We must stop rationalizing our sin or blaming others for it. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did not do this.

Genesis 3:11-13

> 11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"
>
> 12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."
>
> 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Verse 11-13: Sin bred more sin. Often the consequence of sin is that it leads to more sin. It is a vicious cycle that destroys your relationship with God as well as others. The relationship Adam and Eve shared with God, walking in the garden, would never be the same. The perfect harmony between Adam and Eve was now gone. The consequences would not end here.

Genesis 3:16-19

> 16To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."
>
> 17To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through

painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

18It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Verse 16-19: Painful childbirth, toiling at work: we can thank Eve and Adam for this. Their sin has affected every person ever born. That is another consequence of sin, it always affects others. Our sin is never committed in a vacuum. Someone or many people will be adversely affected by our sin. We were all affected by Adam and Eve before we were ever born. Because of them, none of us were born into paradise.

Genesis 3:22-24

22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Verse 22-24: Their sin cost them everything. Their sin cost all of humanity everything. Sin has consequences, devastating consequences. We cannot minimize sin. We must face it for what it truly is and confess it to God. To confess means “to agree”. We need to agree with God that what we did was wrong. No more excuses. No more rationalizations. Nor more blaming. No more hiding. Confess it.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Confess your sin to God and ask for His forgiveness.

What other ways, besides the ones mentioned in this study, do people hide from God?

Why would we choose to hide instead of confessing the sin?

How does sin lead to more sin?

How is sin minimized in our society? How about in the church?

What is wrong with the notion that “this sin only affects me. I’m not hurting anyone else”?

DAY 3

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 3:13-15, 21; Revelation 12:7, 9, 13:8; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:14; Colossians 2:13-15

Adam and Eve were not the only ones who were punished for sin. The serpent was cursed as well.

Genesis 3:13-14

> 13Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
>
> 14So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

Verse 13-15: The serpent receives his curses before Adam and Eve. They will be punished as well but God goes directly to the source first. It was the very source of evil. Please do not get the idea that this was some snake hanging in a tree. My niece has a book of a cute orange snake lounging in a tree by Adam and Eve. This is not it at all. This was not only some animal, but satan himself.

Revelation 12:9

> 9The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Verse 9: Remember that Eve said that she had been deceived by the serpent. This same serpent tries to deceive the whole world. In what way does he deceive them? He deceived Eve into not trusting God. She thought God was trying to hold out on her by not allowing her to eat the fruit on that one tree. His deception is the same today. He wants to deceive us about God. He may try to get some to believe that there is no God. Others he convinces to believe in a false god. And for those who know the true Lord, he tries to get them to not fully depend upon God. The serpent that deceived Eve, deceives others today. We must be aware of his game.

2 Corinthians 2:11

> 11in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Verse 11: To be aware of his schemes, we must realize the fact that he is not harmless. He is not a tiny orange snake hanging from a tree. He is a vicious being, wanting to destroy us. His hatred for us stems from his disdain of God. The serpent cannot harm God so he does the next best thing: he attempts to harm those whom God loves.

Revelation 12:17

> 17Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Verse 17: Who is the devil at war with? He fights those who keep the commands of God and hold onto the testimony of Jesus! If you are a believer, he is at war with you. Think of the word “war”. This is not a water gun fight. This is serious business. We must be aware of the fight. When you are at war, the enemy does not come up to you and say, “I’m the enemy. I wanted to give you fair warning before I attacked you.” Instead, he camouflages himself to try to get you. The serpent in the garden was not a hideous beast. Instead, in some way, it must have seemed harmless to Adam and Eve. The enemy continues this “harmless” tactic today.

2 Corinthians 11:14

> 14And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Verse 14: Satan came to Adam and Eve as a creature of the earth. Adam had named all the animals and had been given dominion by God over them, why would he be guarded against this one? His lack of wisdom proved his downfall. The same is true for us. Not everyone or every situation is as innocent as it seems. Even the enemy will pretend to be an angel of light. He will use whatever it takes to gain access to our lives.

While the enemy is a formidable foe, we do not need to cower in fear. He is under a curse.

Genesis 3:15

> 15And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Verse 15: The enemy had first deceived the woman. However, it would be through a woman that the enemy would be destroyed. It would be thousands of years later when a woman would bear the Seed, Jesus Christ. This seed would crush the power of the serpent. How was this accomplished? Through the cross. On that cross, the enemy would bruise the heel of Jesus, for crucifixion is the only corporal punishment in which a heel would be damaged. But through the death of Jesus, which to the outside would have seemed like a loss, in reality it led to the ultimate victory over sin and death!

Colossians 2:13-15

> 13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Verse 13-15: He has triumphed over the serpent. Through the cross, our sins have been forgiven and the enemy has been defeated! All of this was promised in that garden so long ago. On a bleak day of human history, God gave hope. He symbolized this hope with the shedding of blood.

Genesis 3:21

> 21The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Verse 21: Animal blood was shed so that Adam and Eve could be covered. Years later, the blood of Jesus was shed so that our sins may be covered. The plan of salvation was in place even before the first sin happened.

Revelation 13:8

> 8All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

Verse 8: The Lamb, Jesus Christ, was slain before the foundation of the world. In other words, before the first bite of the forbidden fruit, Jesus had already planned to save the world through the shedding of His blood. Before the enemy had planned to deceive Eve, the Lord had the plan to save her. Praise be to the Lamb who was slain!

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Praise God that He had a plan for salvation before the first sin was committed.

How can believers be deceived by the enemy?

How do we protect ourselves from his deception?

If the enemy was defeated at the cross, what power does he hold now?

The Lord knew how to save the world before the sin had entered the world. What does that teach you about the Lord?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27, 2:16-17, 3:19; Romans 5:12; n 1:3; Galatians 1:10; Matthew 27:27-31; Ephesians 2:1-9, 4:22-24

People are known for who and what they are. We are defined by our looks, our jobs, our past, our finances, our families, and so much more. But imagine the honor that Adam and Eve received by being defined by God.

Genesis 1:26-27

> 26Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."
>
> 27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Verse 26-27: Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. That is how they were defined. Adam and Eve did not look like God for God is Spirit. However, they had a spiritual nature that was made like the Lord's. Their spirit was alive within them and that spirit was in the fashion of the Lord's Spirit. However, when they sinned, what was alive within them died, just as God had warned them.

Genesis 2:16-17

> 16And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Verse 16-17: The spiritual nature of Adam and Eve, which had been made in the image of God, died when they sinned. This death would be passed onto every generation.

Romans 5:12

> 12Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Verse 12: Death has been passed onto us. This death is two fold. The spiritual nature, which was made in the image of God, is dead within us. What was alive in Adam and Eve died and they pass this death onto us. Also, physical death which is the consequence of sin is also a part of every person's life. We die on account of our own sin but this consequence began in

the garden.

Adam and Eve had been defined as being made in the image of God. However, after they sinned, the Lord refers to them in a different way.

Genesis 3:19

> 19By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Verse 19: Sin redefines us. We become known for what we did. Adam and Eve redefined all of humanity by their sin. Instead of being known as having been made in the image of God, they were now known as those formed from the dust of the earth. Since their spiritual nature died, they now could only be known for their physical nature, which was from the dirt. They went from “made in God’s image” to “mud”. That is exactly how sin redefines us. We are no longer associated with the Lord but with the world.

But how can we be redefined? We, by ourselves, cannot. However, Jesus can redefine us. Because He died on the cross, He took upon Himself the spiritual and physical death that we had been punished with. He literally bore the curse upon Himself. In fact read again the punishment Adam was given.

Genesis 3:17-18

> 17To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.
>
> 18It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

Verse 17-18: Now compare these verses with another scene that takes place thousands of years later.

Matthew 27:27-31

> 27Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Verse 27-31: Thorns. The curse of Adam was symbolically worn on the head of Jesus. Because He bore the punishment that we deserved, He can give us His spiritual life.

Ephesians 2:1-9

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast.

Verse 1-9: We are made alive through Christ. What died in the Garden of Eden can be resurrected in us by the One who was resurrected from the grave. He died so that we might have life. He restored what was lost on that fateful day when Adam and Eve sinned. Now, through Him, we no longer have to be defined as dust of the earth, or worldly in nature. Instead, our former ways are radically transformed from death to life. We are redefined by the grace, mercy, and saving power of our Lord Jesus Christ! But we must choose to accept it.

Ephesians 4:22-24

22You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Verse 22-24: Our new self that we receive through Christ is created to be like God. What was alive in Adam and Eve before they sinned is now alive in us. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, we can now be defined once again as made in the image of God.

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord for His mercy and grace to you.

How has sin “redefined” you?

If you are in Christ, then you are new. All of the past labels on your life are gone. How does it feel to know that your spirit is alive and it is made in the image of God?

Explain the two types of death.

How does someone go from spiritual death to spiritual life?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 3:22-24; Psalm 107:1-32; Revelation 2:7, 21:3-5

Paradise. Travel agencies use that word to beckon us to go on vacation. Hawaii is considered "paradise" yet it has experienced damaging hurricanes. Others have claimed the beaches of Indonesia as "paradise" yet recently it experienced a typhoon that killed over a hundred thousand people. Vietnam used to be the place of "paradise" until it suffered the effects of war. Jamaica has been said to be a "paradise" yet the majority of its people bear the weight of poverty.

The word "paradise" is used so loosely in our culture that none of us really know what it is. All we know is that we want to experience it. We long for the perfect place where we are sheltered from heartache, pain, and death. We desire what we were made for. We want what God originally intended. We want the Garden of Eden that was created for us. But our right to this perfection was lost when sin entered the world. All that had been rightfully ours was forfeited. With the introduction of sin came the introduction of suffering, evil, toil, and so much more. All the horrors of history can be traced back to sin, to paradise lost.

Genesis 3:22-23

> 22And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

Verse 22-23: Adam and Eve were kicked out of the house that their Heavenly Father had created for them. But like any good parent, it was because of love. If they had eaten from the tree of life, they would have lived forever under the penalty of their sin. They would have always been separated from God without any hope for redemption. The Lord, longing for relationship, knew that it would only be possible outside of the garden.

We all long for paradise, but if we lived in it would there be any need of God? It is suffering, pain, heartache, and guilt that often drive us into our relationship with God. We experience a need and that need longs to be met. We must go to One greater than ourselves and greater than our pain in order to find the answer. The paradox is that in the Garden we would never come to God. It is outside of the Garden that we run to meet Him.

Psalm 107:1-32

> 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say this— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle.

5 They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away.

6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

7 He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle.

8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men,

9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

10 Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains,

11 for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.

12 So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help.

13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains.

15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men,

16 for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.

17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.

18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.

19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.

22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.

23 Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters.

24 They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep.

25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.

26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.

27 They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.

29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.

30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.

31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.

32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

Verse 1-32: When did the people cry out to the Lord? In the midst of their pain, suffering, and sin. It is the loving kindness of the Lord that allows us to experience these problems for without them we would never turn to God. His love allows the pain so that we might come to Him for salvation. He allows us to experience temporal heartache in order that we might come to eternal salvation. That is why the way to paradise is denied to us right now.

Genesis 3:24

24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Verse 24: We are barred from the tree of life, from the Garden of Eden, from paradise for now for our own good. But our Father knows the perfect time to restore what was lost for us.

Revelation 2:7

7He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Verse 7: For those who overcome this world, the tree of life will be given to them. Paradise will be restored to us one day. The heartache and pain will disappear and we will live eternally in the presence of God.

Revelation 21:3-5

> 3And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
>
> 5He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Verse 3-5: Everything will be new. All that was taken from us due to the consequences of sin will be restored. The pain and suffering which drove us to our Lord will no longer be needed for we will be in His midst. Just as He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, so He will walk with us. The relationship for which we were made will last forever. Paradise. It is waiting for us.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to speak to you.

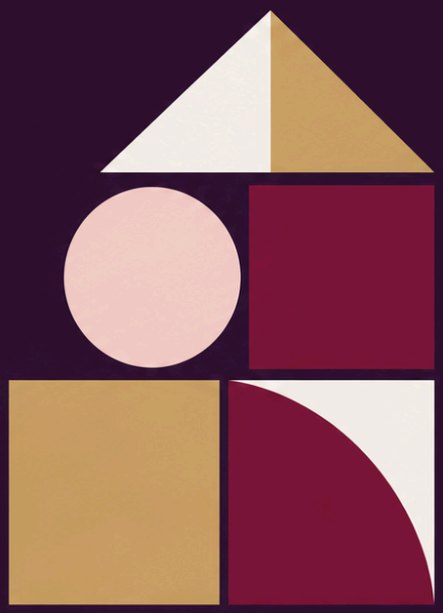
How does pain and suffering draw us to the Lord?

How is the loving kindness of the Lord displayed by allowing difficult circumstances in our lives?

Why is the knowledge of heaven helpful to us now?

BIBLE STUDY

Building Blocks



RESONATE

Building Blocks: Cold Blood

Have you ever killed anyone? Most of you would answer “no”. So what can we learn from a story about murder? Sadly, we can learn a lot about our own human, selfish, evil nature.

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 4:1-5; Romans 12:1

Genesis 4:1-2

> 1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

Verse 1-2: Cain was the first son ever born. He was the first baby ever held. Imagine all the firsts that Adam and Eve witnessed as ever parent does: first step, first words, first smile, and so much more. Another first experience was that Cain was the first person to have a little brother.

These two brothers had different interests. Cain was the farmer and Abel was the rancher. In the musical Oklahoma one of the more popular songs goes like this: “Oh, the farmer and the cowman should be friends, one man likes to push a plow the other likes to rope a cow but that’s no reason why they can’t be friends…”. Yet, in the movie there are extreme dislikes and prejudices between the two groups. This rivalry is as old as Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:3-5

> 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Verse 3-5: This was not a matter of favoritism. God did accept Abel’s offering because He liked Abel more than Cain. This had nothing to do with fruits and vegetables. Instead, the issue was about obedience. The acceptable sacrifice to God was animals not produce.

Animal sacrifices were the symbols that the Lord created to represent the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ. To bring an animal sacrifice was to place faith in the Lord who would provide a way to forgive our sin. Abel brought the prescribed offering to God. However, Cain brought what he wanted to bring. He was saying, “I’m proud of what I have done and I am going to offer this to God.” But our desire of what to offer the Lord is not what He requires. He decides what the offering should be.

Today, we do not deal with animal sacrifices. The blood of Jesus has been shed on behalf of our sins. However, we are still required to make other types of sacrifices.

Romans 12:1

> 1Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Verse 1: Our lives are to be offered to God. Abel worshipped the Lord by presenting an animal sacrifice; we worship the Lord by giving ourselves to Him. But just like Abel, we cannot choose what or how to give. Instead, the Lord determines the sacrifices we must bring. For example, if the Lord called someone to give the sacrifice of time by ministering to people at the homeless shelter, he cannot decide to just give money to the shelter instead. We do not determine what is offered. We are just called to be obedient.

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to show you what “sacrifice” He desires from you.

How do you discover what God is calling you to offer to Him?

In what ways are you making sacrifices for the Lord?

How have you ignored the sacrifices that God has called you to make?

DAY 2

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 4:5-8; James 1:14-15

Cain's sacrifice was rejected by the Lord. There are many ways we can handle the Lord's rebuke. Cain shows us the wrong way to respond.

Genesis 4:5

> 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Verse 5: Cain got mad. Cain pouted. There are few things worse than being around someone acting like that. Cain threw an adult version of a temper tantrum. His heavenly Parent did not let Him get away with it.

Genesis 4:6

> 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?

Verse 6-7: Why do we get mad when we do something wrong? We know that what we did was wrong yet we get angry at everyone else. Cain knew that his sacrifice was not what God had asked from him. The Lord was not going to change His standard for Cain. God decides what is right and wrong, not us. Cain knew that he was doing wrong yet he went ahead and did it anyway. He was mad that God did not change his mind for him. This anger built up. God confronted it and warned Him to get his emotions under control.

Genesis 4:7

> 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Verse 7: We are faced with the opportunity to sin on a daily basis. However, we can choose to overcome it. It is a matter of our will. Cain's emotions were out of control. But he could will himself to do what was right even if he did not feel like it. He could master his thought processes which would have mastered his feelings. But if it is not mastered, sin will breed more sin.

James 1:14-15

> 14but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Verse 14-15: It is our own choice to be led away by our own evil desires. By going down the wrong path, sin awaits us. The sin is destructive. In Cain's cause, it was murderous.

Genesis 4:8

> 8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Verse 8: Cain went from anger to murder. We may read that and think, "I would never do that." You may not murder physically, but have you killed someone's emotions with harsh words? Have you murdered someone's reputation through gossip? Whenever we do not master our emotions, sin will be committed. From murder to meanness, sin is destructive.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Confess anything in your life which you are brooding over. Ask for the Lord’s help in mastering over the sin that is crouching at your heart’s door.

In what ways have you experienced the truth of James 1:14-15?

How can sin be mastered?

DAY 3

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 4:8-9; Proverbs 9:1-19, 10:1

It is futile to hide sin. It will be exposed. God knows what you have done.

Genesis 4:8-9

> 8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.
>
> 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Verse 8-9: I find these verses weirdly humorous. There are a handful of people on the earth, yet somehow Cain thought he would get away with murder. He was so deceived by this illusion that He even lies to the Lord about it. Sin causes distorted thinking in our lives.

In the book of Proverbs, the way of sinner is called foolish.

Proverbs 9:13-18

> 13 The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge.
>
> 14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,
>
> 15 calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way.
>
> 16 "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment.
>
> 17 "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!"
>
> 18 But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

Verse 13-18: It does not make sense to choose folly over wisdom. Yet, when we sin, that is exactly what we are doing. We will come up with strange thoughts to justify our choices. Yet, this distorted thinking which stems from sin only leads to death. This foolishness hurts others around us.

Proverbs 10:1

1 The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.

Verse 1: Adam and Eve, the first two parents on earth, experience the horror of having a son murder his brother. The death of a child is heart-wrenching but it is compounded by the killer being a child as well. I cannot imagine their grief. I wonder if they thought back to the garden. Their foolish choice there led to their sons being born with a sin nature. Their foolishness bred more foolishness. Our distorted thinking can hurt those even of the next generation. Adam and Eve went from being the first to having children to being the first to bury a child.

In our lives, sin leads to heartache. We can choose to stop acting foolishly. We can make wise decisions.

Proverbs 9:1-9

1 Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars.

2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

3 She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city.

4 "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment.

5 "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.

6 Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.

7 "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.

8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.

9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

Verse 1-9: To go from foolishness to wisdom, we must be willing to learn. We must accept rebuke from the Lord and change our ways. We must be diligent in pursuing the ways of righteousness, which comes from the Word. Then, we will make wise decisions and prevent have to live with the terrible heartache that sin brings to our lives.

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Confess any sin that you have been justifying or hiding.

How is foolishness and sin connected?

How does sin lead to distorted thinking?

How can wisdom be gained?

DAY 4

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 4:8-16; 2 Samuel 12:7-23

Sin steals from us and from others. The world says that sin gets you ahead but it is not true. Sin has devastating consequences. The effects of sin cannot be undone. We can be forgiven but the consequences will still take place.

Genesis 4:8-10

> 8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.
>
> 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"
>
> 10 The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

Verse 8-10: Sin destroys relationships. In one way or another, others are hurt by our sin. Not only does our sin affect others but it affects us as well.

Genesis 4:11-12

> 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Verse 11-12: Cain loved to work the land. His love for farming overrode his love for God. His sin began when he brought produce as a sacrifice instead of an animal. This sin bred out of control and resulted in Abel’s murder. The very thing he loved, working the land, was taken from him.

I watched a news story about a baseball player. After high school, he was signed by a professional team. He received a huge salary. He was being watched as the potential next “all-time great” player. Sadly, he began using drugs. Everything he had was taken from him. Due to the consequences of sin, his dreams were destroyed. Sin takes so much from us. We allow it in and all it does is destroy us. Our decision to sin wreaks havoc in our lives.

When we are faced with the consequences of our sin, we can choose to turn to God or away from Him. Cain chose to turn away from the Lord.

Genesis 4:13-16

13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

15 But the LORD said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Verse 13-16: Cain never acknowledged his wrong doing. Instead, he complained about his punishment. The one who murdered his brother was upset that he could be killed. He was concerned only about what would happen to him. He had no remorse.

King David, however, gives us a better example of how to respond to God when suffering through the consequences of sin.

2 Samuel 12:7-23

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

11 "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' "

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. 16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

19 David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

20 Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

21 His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

Verse 7-23: When confronted with his sin, David confessed his wrongdoing. When faced with the consequences of his sin, he asked for the Lord’s intervention to spare his child. But after the child died, David continued to worship the Lord. He knew that God was in control, even over the consequences of our sin.

When confronted with sin, turn to the Lord not away from him. Yes, you will suffer the consequences of your wrong decisions, but you will have the Lord who will give you His strength during the difficult times.

Cain did not choose to turn to God. Instead, he wandered the earth. He stayed outside the presence of God. Do not let this be your legacy.

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Praise God for being a merciful God. Receive His forgiveness for your sin.

How do we turn from God when He confronts our sin?

How should we respond to the discipline of the Lord?

Why does God allow us to experience the consequences of our sin?

DAY 5

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:10-15; John 15:12-13

If you haven’t killed anyone lately then you think that you are nothing like Cain. We believe that only the physical action of killing equates us to him. However, the Scripture has a wider definition of murder than just the physical act.

Matthew 5:21-22

> 21"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Verse 21-22: The Lord considers anger, meanness, critical words, rude behavior, and other things along this line as sinful. We cannot minimize our actions because the person is not physically killed. The emotional harm inflicted on others is a “mini-murder” that God will judge.

How can we “murderers” be paroled from our evil ways? There is only one answer: love.

1 John 3:10

> 10This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Verse 10: We are recognized of being children of God by our right actions and our loving ways. These are the signs of being a Christian.

1 John 3:11-12

> 11This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

Verse 11-12: Cain is forever known by his evil works. How will you be remembered? We are called to be known by our love and our righteous actions. The Word testifies that Abel did what was right. Thus, he was hated by Cain. Yet, we should not be surprised that darkness hates the light.

1 John 3:13-14

> 13Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. 14We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

Verse 13-14: We are not responsible for how the world feels about us. However, we are accountable for how we treat others. We are to show love. This is the sign to the world that we have eternal life. To not act in love is to act like people who do not know Christ. To love is to be like Him.

John 15:12-13

> 12My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Verse 12-13: Jesus defined His sacrifice on the cross as a showcase of His love. We are to give of ourselves to others to show love. He commands us to do this. It is not a nice thought or wishful thinking. We are to love others as we ourselves are loved by God.

If we act in love, then we will make right decisions. Righteousness is not legalism, a system of right and wrong, but an overflow of love. Out of our love for God, we will want to keep from sin. Out of our love for others, we will not want to hurt them. This gives life to others and then we become “mini-life givers” instead of “mini-murderers”.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to fill you with His love and allow it to overflow to others.

Give examples of Cain-like behaviors.

Ask a few people that know for their honest opinion about if and how you showcase the love of God. Also, ask them if they recognize any Cain-like ways in you. Be receptive to their responses.

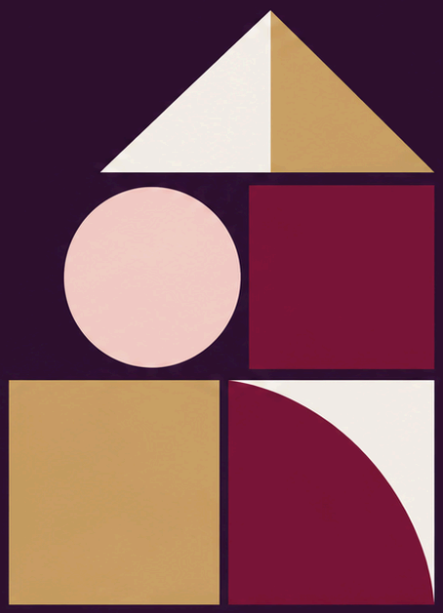
If the defining characteristics of Christians should be righteousness and love, how does your church radiate these qualities in the community?

In what ways are you being a negative testimony about Jesus?

How can you begin to showcase the love of God to others around you?

BIBLE STUDY

Building Blocks



RESONATE

Building Blocks: Down Came the Rain

Some of us have felt the acute awareness of being one of the few believers at work, at school, or even in our families. This week we will study a man who has the only righteous person on earth. His faith saved not only his family but also preserved mankind.

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 6:5-10; 4:1; Ephesians 4:30

The nightly news tells stories of a horrific nature. People commit crimes that shock us, depress us, and frighten us. If these stories offend us, how much more is a holy God offended?

Genesis 6:5-6

> 5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

Verse 5-6: The Lord was the one who created people. He formed man from the dust of the ground. He was like a delighted father watching his children with joy. However, Adam and Eve sinned. They were cast from their perfect environment. Yet, the Lord still desired a relationship with the ones He had made. Eve understood this.

Genesis 4:1

> 1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man."

Verse 1: Eve understood that God was still involved in her life. She was able to recognize his help. But within a few short generations, this message was lost. God was not acknowledged and people committed evil. God was sad that He had made humans.

Did you know that the feelings of God can be hurt? We know that God is God. We believe that God judges sin, which He does. But do we understand that the judgment follows a broken heart? Every parent understands this. You discipline your child but it is out of the hurt that they would commit such an offense against you. The old saying before a punishing the child is “this hurts me more than it hurts you.” Of course, no child believes this. However, if a parent has a true love for the child, then it is true. You hurt over your child’s offense and you hurt that you must discipline the offense. Our heavenly Father’s heart aches because of our sin.

Please understand that it is not only unbelievers’ sin that breaks the heart of God. As believers, we can still hurt Him because of our sin.

Ephesians 4:30

> 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Verse 30: The Holy Spirit who resides within you can be grieved by your sin. This part of the trinity of God has a heart that can be broken. In a society that takes sin so lightly we often forget that we can hurt the Lord. He is such a tender Father, who is sensitive to our choices in life. You can not truly love someone unless you are able to let that person hurt you. The Lord is transparent enough to let us know that He loves us and is willing to be hurt by us when we sin. Do not grieve the Spirit of God.

Genesis 6:7

> 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth— men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them."

Verse 7: Do not read this verse and think God is pouting. Often people misunderstand this verse. Instead, this verse showcases two attributes of God: judgment and grace. The judgment is evident that those committing sin are to be blotted out. They are sinning against a holy God. However, the grace of the Lord is shown by the fact that if humans were blotted out then future generations would not be born. Thus, there would be fewer people who live to offend a holy God. There would be less people who sin against the Lord and have to be punished eternally for that sin. In this one verse, we see both attributes at work.

The Lord had to view an entire corrupt earth. There was one man who had to live in it.

Genesis 6:8-10

> 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.
>
> 9 This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Verse 8-10: One person on the entire earth is righteous. Noah had three sons; they were not in the list of righteous people. Noah had a wife; she is not listed as a righteous person. Noah alone, not only on earth but also in his very own family, finds favor in the eyes of God.

We have all heard about peer pressure and the difficulty in staying strong in the midst of it. Noah was being “peer pressured” by the entire world, yet he remained righteous. He was righteous at home, at work, and among friends. His integrity was consistent no matter where he was or whom he was with. His choice to not conform led to salvation for future generations. How will your choices for integrity, or for righteousness, impact those around you?

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to be righteous like Noah despite the pressures around you to conform to this world.

What benefit is it for us to know that the heart of God can be grieved?

Do you know of any examples of someone living righteously despite pressures from those around them? How were lives changed because of these righteous people?

In what ways are you an example to this world of the way of righteousness?

What part of your life do you need to change in order to be a better example to those around you?

DAY 2

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 6:11-22; Colossians 3:17; John 14:23-24

The movie The Great Escape tells the true story of captured soldiers in a German camp. They form an escape plan in which they tunneled under the camp to outside the barb wire fences. Sadly, only three survived to tell the tale of the ingenuity these men had to create their way to freedom.

Noah also had an escape plan. But his plan was given in detail by God Himself.

Genesis 6:11-16

> 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14 So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15 This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. 16 Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.

Verse 11-16: Noah was told how to build an ark. The details had to be followed in order to ensure his survival. This was not a thrown together project but one that would take patience and excellence.

Is your work done with the utmost care? Each of us, like Noah, is called by God to complete the tasks before us. Noah followed his assignment to the last detail. Of course, we may not hear the voice of God aloud about how to handle our workload. But we do know that He wants us to do our best in it.

Colossians 3:17

> 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Verse 17: We are to do all of our work as unto the Lord. Noah had a great motivation for doing this for he knew it would save his life as well as his family’s lives.

Genesis 6:17

> 17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens,
> every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.

Verse 7: Would you be motivated to build an arc if you knew a flood was coming? I am sure you would want to get started as soon as possible. You would not shortcut your project in anyway for you would not want to risk the possibility of the boat sinking. Not only that, other lives may be on the line!

Genesis 6:18-21

> 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your
> sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. 19 You are to bring into the ark two of
> all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of every kind of
> bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground
> will come to you to be kept alive. 21 You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten
> and store it away as food for you and for them."

Verse 18-21: All humanity and all living creatures' survival were dependent upon Noah obeying God, even in the details. All people and animals may not be relying on you but there are probably some people whose lives are affected by your obedience to the Lord. Obey Him in all things, even the small matters. Only God knows who can be saved by you.

John 14:23-24

> 23Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him,
> and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24He who does not love me will
> not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father
> who sent me.

Verse 23-24: Follow the example of Noah and show your love to God by obeying Him in all matters.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Confess any tendency to do a mediocre job. Ask the Lord to help you to do everything unto Him.

How do we discover the will of God for our lives?

What helps you follow the will of the Lord?

How can our work be a witness to others?

DAY 3

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 7; 2 Peter 2:5; John 1:11

Familiarity with Bible stories often leave us cold to the Word. We no longer experience truth for we shut it off before it has a chance to change us. The story of Noah is well known. Even the world is familiar with the term of the “ark”. Today, read the words as if for the first time. Think through how it must have felt for Noah, a righteous man in a corrupt generation.

Genesis 7

1 The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. 2 Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, 3 and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. 4 Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."

5 And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. 8 Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, 9 male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. 12 And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. 14 They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. 15 Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. 16 The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

17 For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. 18 The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19 They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. 20 The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. 21 Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. 22 Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. 23 Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

24 The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

Verse 1-24: All the people of the earth are wiped out. These are people Noah knew. He probably heard people pounding on the ark, desiring to get in. Maybe he heard the screams of those knowing that they would soon perish. Faces and names of people flashed before his eyes. Pictures of the ark usually show Noah smiling with all the animals. This is false. He knew the gravity of the situation. The entire time he had built the ark he also labored in getting people to join him on it.

2 Peter 2:5

5if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;

Verse 4-5: Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He pointed the way to those who were lost. He spoke truth to the lies of culture. He extended the gift of life for those he knew would soon perish. Sadly, his message was ignored.

This was also how Jesus felt.

John 1:11

11He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Verse 11: The Way, the Truth, and the Life experienced rejection. Those who refuse to accept His gift of salvation are condemned. Just as in the days of Noah. Just as in our day today. Our hearts need to break over the lost for they will soon face punishment. We should not take this lightly. Noah knew the way to salvation and over a hundred years he was faithful in sharing this message. Only seven people came aboard with him out of the entire human race. Yet, he was still faithful with the message. Will you be faithful today?

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you be a “preacher of righteousness” to the lost around you.

How can we begin viewing the lost as those who are under the sentence of punishment?

What about Noah’s example can inspire you to share the gospel message?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 8, 9:1-17

Have you ever had to wait? I mean, really wait. I am not talking about having to wait for dessert until after dinner. I am referring to waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of God. Noah knows all about this type of waiting. The waiting seemed to drag on and on.

Genesis 8:1-12

1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him
in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. 2 Now the springs
of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped
falling from the sky. 3 The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the
hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, 4 and on the seventeenth day of the
seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 The waters continued to
recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the
mountains became visible.

6 After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark 7 and sent out a
raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. 8 Then
he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. 9 But
the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of
the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove
and brought it back to himself in the ark. 10 He waited seven more days and again sent
out the dove from the ark. 11 When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its
beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from
the earth. 12 He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did
not return to him.

Verse 1-14: Noah had waited and waited and waited. In his waiting, he still literally tested the waters. Often we go into two extremes when we are waiting upon the Lord. First, we do not truly wait but work to control all of our circumstances. We claim to be waiting but instead of devoting time to prayer and Bible study, we are too busy working for the Lord. The other extreme is to spend so much time "waiting" that we no longer do anything. We are not proactive in seeking the answers of God. Noah had just the right balance between these two extremes. He did not send out a bird daily. Instead, he would send one out but then wait a week before sending a bird out again. He was waiting while taking initiative to seeking the answers of the Lord.

Genesis 8-13-19

> 13 By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. 14 By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.
>
> 15 Then God said to Noah, 16 "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. 17 Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."
>
> 18 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. 19 All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

Verse 13-19: Noah knew that the waters had abated from the earth. However, he did not attempt to leave the ark until he had received permission from the Lord. In our lives a door may be opened but we need to wait for God’s command to walk through it. When the Lord does give us permission, our response needs to be like Noah.

Genesis 8:20

> 20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.

Verse 20: Noah worshipped. How often has God answered our prayers and we forget to take time to thank Him? Noah immediately set up an altar so that he could praise the God who had delivered him and his family through the waters. God responded to this act of praise.

Genesis 8:21-22, 9:1-17

> 21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.
>
> 22 "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."
>
> 1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. 2 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

4 "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. 5 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

7 As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you 10 and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you— every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: 13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

Verse 21-22, 1-17: Noah’s act of worship, led to a covenant made by God. His praise preserved future generations. On response to a sacrifice at the altar, the Lord promised to never destroy the entire earth by flood again. The sign of this promise is the rainbow. After thousands of years, there has never been another world-wide flood. God is faithful to His promises. Noah received this covenant from God because he took time to worship.

Worship is powerful. Noah’s worship still affects us today. Tragedies like Katrina remind us of the devastation of floods. Imagine that world-wide. It will never happen because God responded to the praise of Noah. How will your life of praise affect others?

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Praise God who is faithful to His promises.

Of the two extremes of “waiting”, which one do you lean towards?

How can you learn to wait upon the Lord in a balanced way?

How will you increase the amount of time dedicated to worship?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 9:18-27; 1 Peter 4:8

Noah's life exemplifies righteousness but it also teaches carelessness. After the spiritual high of receiving the covenant of God, Noah fell into sin.

Genesis 9:18-21

> 18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) 19 These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth.
>
> 20 Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. 21 When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.

Verse 18-21: The man who had guarded himself against the corruption of the entire world did not guard against himself. Often I am the bad influence in my life. This flesh of mine can lead me to the direction of the sin.

Sadly, someone else walked right into sin himself.

Genesis 9:22

> 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside.

Verse 22: The sin of Ham was mockery. He did not go to tell his brothers so that they could help him think of a way to help Noah. Instead, he went outside to gossip. Instead of covering the sin of his father; he exposed it. As people of God, this is the opposite of what we are called to do.

1 Peter 4:8

> 8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Verse 8: We are to cover the wrongs of others. We do not expose them for the purpose of belittling or mocking someone else. We must find a way to cover their action. This is how we show them our love. Noah's two others sons showcased this type of love for their father.

Genesis 9:23

> 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness.

Verse 23: The actions of Shem and Japheth led to promoting the relationship with their father. But Ham’s actions evoked the anger of his father, leading to a broken relationship.

Genesis 9:24-27

> 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers."
>
> 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.
>
> 27 May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave."

Verse 24-27: In your relationships be like Shem and Japheth. Show forgiveness through love. Don’t expose others but cover them. Then your friendships will be blessed.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to fill you with His love and allow it to overflow to others.

How can we guard ourselves against the flesh?

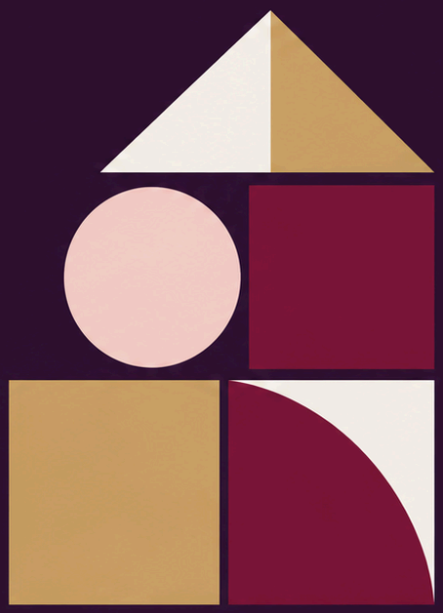
In what ways do we expose the sins of others?

When others have fallen into sin, how can we cover them with love?

Who is someone you know that needs your “covering”?

BIBLE STUDY

Building Blocks



RESONATE

Building Blocks: Everyone’s Babbling

Unity can be both positive and negative. The difference is determined by what people are unified around. The common cause can lead to positive reforms or terrible consequences. This week we will learn how negative unification led to separation amongst all people.

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Genesis 11:1; Psalm 133:1; John 17:20-23; Romans 15:5-6

If you have traveled oversees, you may have experienced the difficulty of language barriers. In high school, my French teacher told me story about the intricacies of language. She was living with a family in France while in college. Her host cooked an elaborate meal one evening. My teacher told the host that the meal was excellent and that she was very full. The children’s eyes grew big and adults began to snicker. Her host quickly explained that her terms for “very full” meant “pregnant” in French.

Language barriers lead to miscommunication. But this was not always the case.

Genesis 11:1

> 1Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.

Verse 1: Imagine being able to travel anywhere and not experience any problems with reading signs or talking to new people or listening to the radio or watching television. At the beginning centuries of the earth, the people were unified in their language.

Of course today this is not the case and later this week we will learn how this happened. But for now, let us address unity.

Psalm 133:1

> 1How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!

Verse 1: Unity is precious. It is something to be cherished, as long as we are rallying around the correct cause. As believers, unity is something that should be evident for we are called to it.

John 17:20-23

> 20"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Verse 20-23: Unity within the church is vital for the expansion of the church. Barriers between churches cause a resistance to the gospel in the community. The same is true for divisions within one church. When we choose to fight amongst ourselves, we are hindering the opportunity for the unsaved to believe and receive the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As believers around the world, we may not share the same physical language, but we can share the same spiritual one. Our common language is Christ. We are to be unified in Him so that we may be unified with one another.

How is unity in the church achieved? It is only possible in God, through God, and by God.

Romans 15:5-6

> 5May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 4-6: If you are struggling with someone in the church, meditate on the verses from Romans. The Lord desires that we give Him glory together. This is corporate worship. It is only possible by receiving a spirit of unity. You must ask God for it. This gift is a willingness to lay aside petty differences and live together in a harmony that gives glory to God.

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Confess anything that keeps you from having the spirit of unity.

Why would disunity cause a bad witness to a watching world?

If someone is a source of disunity at your church, how should the person be handled?

How is unity fostered among a body of believers?

In the future, when someone or something in the church is bothering you, how can you handle the situation in a way that will keep the unity?

DAY 2

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 11:2, 9:1; Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 5:13-20

I have heard stories from people who share how they had known that God had called them to do something and they stopped following his direction in their lives. Some ignored the call outright while others followed for awhile and then chose their own way. Once they got off course, they made more decisions contrary to His will. The regret they experience would break your heart.

A world of people forsook their call. This one bad decision led to more which spiraled into a divided world.

Genesis 11:2

> 2As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

Verse 2: At first glance, this verse does not seem like a big deal. However, once you know their calling, then you will understand how they no longer followed the way of the Lord.

Genesis 9:7

> 7As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

Verse 1: The commission was to fill the earth, not just stay in one place. They had been given an adventure: to see new territory, to experience new things, to live by faith, to go throughout the world. Instead, they chose to settle. They wanted what was comfortable, what was easier, what was more stable and predictable. It sounds a lot like our spiritual lives. We have been given a grand calling, but are we accepting it?

Matthew 28:19-20

> 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Verse 19-20: We have been called to go throughout the earth and fill it with new believers. It is an exciting adventure. Yet, how many of us have settled on the "spiritual plains". We are not living out our calling but instead have accepted a safe and mediocre spiritual experience.

Ephesians 5:13-20

13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

15Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 13-20: Wake up! Get off the plains and live the world-wide adventure. Make the most of every opportunity. Life is short. Don’t waste it on a boring spiritual existence. It is time to move on. We need to live a life that impacts those around us. Now is the time to live out our calling.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to give you His vision of people coming to God through you.

How have you settled in your spiritual journey?

What hinders you from living out your calling?

In what way can you begin to follow the leading of the Lord?

Who can you ask to hold you accountable to get off the “plains” and begin living the spiritual adventure?

DAY 3

The Word

Today’s Scripture: Proverbs 16:18, 28:26; Genesis 11:1-4; Isaiah 55:9

What causes sin? What leads to us falling away from the Lord? Pride.

Proverbs 16:18

> 18Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Verse 18: Pride comes before the fall. You can trace every sin you commit back to this terrible attitude of our hearts. If you have not taken time to evaluate pride and its effects in your life, do so now. For when you do not humble yourself, you will commit more sin against God, and consequences will follow. The people of the world, however, did not check the pride of their heart and it built literally into more sin.

Genesis 11:1-3

> 1Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.
>
> 3They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar.

Verse 1-4: The people knew that they were called to fill the earth. But they decided to stop along the way. Then, they got the idea of making brick and mortar, intending on building a city. However, this was not enough. They wanted more than just a city.

Genesis 11:4

> 4Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

Verse 4: They wanted a tower, and not just any tower but the tallest tower ever made. They wanted to reach the sky. It would be bigger and better than every tower. This tower would bring renowned fame.

Isn’t fame what our culture longs for? Musicians, actors, and sportsmen are literally called “stars”. They are “above the earth”, like a tower that reaches the heavens. We put them on these high pedestals that no human deserves. There is only One who is above the heavens. He alone deserves honor due His Name.

For those of who aren't famous, we may think the sins committed by the people building the tower do not relate to us. However, if you are attempting to make a name for yourself in anyway, then you are in sin. We are not given gifts, resources, or a personality to give glory to ourselves. Instead, everything about us should be agents of giving glory to the Lord.

Besides elevating themselves to a position that no one deserves, another sin the people committed was attempting to be the masters of their own fate. They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens…and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

They had determined that they were in control of God's will for their lives. They did not seek Him, instead they used their own reasoning and determined what was best for them. Of course, only God alone knows what is best for us. To choose our own way, leads us down a destructive path. In their attempt to build, they tore down their relationship with the Lord.

I recall one time speaking to a music minister about praying over decisions. His response was, "I believe God gave us a brain to use." I was taken aback and said, "I trust His thoughts over mine." We have a limited viewpoint. We need to rely on the Lord for helping us make wise decisions. God wants more for you than you could ever desire for yourself. Trust His reasoning, not yours.

Isaiah 55:9

> 9"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Verse 9: His ways and thoughts are far beyond ours. The people attempted to be like God by positioning themselves high in a tower that reached the heavens. But they did not understand by elevating themselves physically, they could not be elevated in thinking, in feeling, or in living. They would be the same, only standing on higher steps. It is foolish they even thought that. But every time we choose to do things "our way", we are foolish as well.

Proverbs 28:26

> 26He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

Verse 26: Do not trust yourself. Trust God. Walk in His ways.

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Confess the pride in your heart. Humble yourself before the Lord.

Give examples of ways people try to build a name for themselves.

In what area of your life do you struggle with trusting God’s ways instead of your own?

How can your trust in the Lord grow?

DAY 4

The Word

Today’s Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Chronicles 16:9a; Genesis 11:4-7

All of us spend time doing something. How do you spend each day? Each night, evaluate what you did for the last 24 hours. Did you do anything for the kingdom of God? We are called to invest in the eternal life.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

> 10By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Verse 10-15: We are to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Everything done for the Lord is like gold, silver, or costly stones. All other actions which are temporal and meaningless are like wood, hay or straw. Are you building what will last for eternity or will it be burned up in judgment? These are questions all believers should ponder.

The people of the tower of Babel were building unto themselves and not unto the Lord.

Genesis 11:4-5

> 4Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."
>
> 5But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building.

Verse 4-5: The Lord sees what we do. Our actions are not hidden from him. Just as he viewed the temporal and worldly efforts of the people, so He sees us today.

2 Chronicles 16:9a

> 9For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him…

Verse 9: The eyes of the Lord look for those who are committed to Him. He gives strength to those who live for Him. But for those who will not, He will tear down the works of their hands.

Genesis 11:6-7

> 6The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

Verse 6-7: The Lord knew that together the people's sins would grow. They would think of more and more perverse ways of exalting themselves. The people would then lead their children into the same foolish sins. They were building a lifestyle that would affect the future generations. By the grace of God, the people were stopped. The sin they were committing was no longer able to continue.

The people were building the tower out of brick and tar. But from the eternal viewpoint, their building was wood, haw, and straw. Think about what you are building in your life. From God's viewpoint, what does it look like? Is it something He wants you to stop building or is it something that He will strengthen you to continue to build?

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord for Him to show you how you are building your life.

What in your life needs to stop?

In what area do you need the Lord’s strength to keep living for things that have eternal value?

How have you experienced the grace of God by His interfering with your sin?

How would you live differently if you kept in mind the fact that the Lord’s eyes are always upon you?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture: Genesis 9:7, 11:8-9; Matthew 12:34-37

God's plans are never thwarted. I find that comforting. His will is always carried out. He is not limited by anyone or anything. The power of God amazes me. However, I am also humbled to know that the way God may carry His plan out is not necessarily ideal for me.

Genesis 9:7, 11:8

> 7As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."
>
> 8So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.

Verse 7, 8: The plan of the Lord for the people to fill the earth had not changed. He had told the people to do this. Just because they decided to stop on a plain, God's will was not affected. His directive would still be carried out. However, because of their sin, they would not live on the earth as they had before with a common language. Instead, they experienced the division of language. Then, they were scattered on the earth-to fill it, just as God had said.

Genesis 11:9

> 9That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Verse 9: Imagine talking to someone and suddenly you do not understand what he is saying. You tell him, "Why are you muttering?" But the look on his face shows that he is confused by your words. You both begin to speak, somewhat afraid of what is going on. Your friend pulls someone to you to try to mediate but neither of you understand what he is saying. The three of you are all becoming frightened. You hear other people yelling, experiencing the same dilemma. Your friend hears a voice of someone he understands. They are talking and yet you cannot even grasp one word. You are no longer able to speak to your friend. You sadly walk away.

There were broken relationships that day. Friends could no longer converse. The consequence of sin was broken relationships. We still feel that division today. Language barriers prevent many people from coming together.

Sadly, even when we speak the same language, our words can still divide us.

Matthew 12:34-37

Verse 34-37: We will stand before God and give an account. Did we use our words to build bridges in our relationships or to tear one another down? Our words reflect our heart. The babbling at Babel was due to their hearts desire to sin against God. Our words are either babble or godly. Either way, they reflect the true condition of our hearts.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

Confess any words that did not reflect the good of the Lord. If you need to ask someone's forgiveness, make every effort to do that today.

How do you feel about giving an account of all of your words to the Lord?

Approximately what percent of your words spoken on a daily basis reflect the good in your heart?

How can you increase the percentage of the good things you say each day?

What do you need to do in order to prevent saying what is evil?