

Week 1 Discussion Questions

THE STORY OF GOD: CREATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God, the main character of this story, is the personal, all-powerful being who made everything that exists. He is the true ruler of the universe—lovingly providing for all that is under His care. The kingdom, or sphere of authority, that God set up was not restricted to the heavens, but God powerfully, intentionally, and creatively spoke all of creation into existence: He precisely laid the foundations of the earth. He intentionally separated the waters from the land, filling that land with beautiful flowers and unique animals. He splashed His creative canvas with many colors and fragrances that all declared His worth. In five days, God masterfully set up a physical kingdom that was separate from Him, yet uniquely and personally cared for by Him. At the end of each day, God reflected on His work, saying, “It is good.”

On the sixth day, God created the first people. God said, “Let us make man in our image,” and He formed the dust of the ground together and breathed into it the breath of life. Thus the first humans were created and placed in a perfect garden where they could enjoy the good reign of this God. The people were decidedly different than the rest of creation in that they were given the responsibility of caring for the creation. God spoke to this first man, Adam, and told him to enjoy all He had created: the animals, the flavors, the sights, and the work. Adam and all the humans were created with the ability to enjoy this wonderful environment God had fashioned. They were also created with the great task of reflecting the King’s goodness and greatness throughout all of creation.

God made it clear to Adam there were two trees in the center of the garden. One was the Tree of Life. The fruit from this tree was to be enjoyed and eaten just like the rest of the trees. The other tree, known as the Knowledge of Good and Evil, was the only tree they were not to eat from. If Adam ate of this tree, he would surely die. This conversation between Adam and God continued as God described what it should look like for Adam to live in this garden. Adam had responsibilities to cultivate the garden and name the animals, operating under God’s authority to cultivate the world.

Adam went about the work God gave him to do. As he worked God said it was not good for man to be alone—he needed a helper. So God caused a deep sleep to come over Adam, and by taking a rib from his side he created a woman named Eve for Adam to enjoy, love, protect, care for, and work alongside in relationship. When Adam woke up he broke into poetry and declared how amazed he was by what God had created. This first marriage was enjoyed without shame and guilt; they were naked in every sense and not the least bit afraid of rejection. God commissioned both the man and the woman with the tasks of cultivating the potential in His creation and multiplying their family by having kids. After the sixth day and the creation of man in His own image, God reflected, “It is very good!”

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Then on the seventh day God rested and reflected on the goodness of His creation. This was not the end of God's relationship with His creation, but rather it was only the beginning. Each day God would come down in the cool of the day and talk with Adam and Eve, teaching them the best possible way to live life and showing them how to live under His good reign. Adam and Eve were able to enjoy both the goodness and greatness of their Creator and His creation. They worked faithfully in the garden, cultivating it and developing its potential to bring glory to God. They lived in perfect harmony in their relationships with God, His world, and each other. This truly was a good Kingdom!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe how you think the perfect world would look.
- Describe the peace that existed in the garden.
- What was man created to do?
- What do you learn about God in this story? About people? About God's world?