



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Story: The Fall – Weekend of April 13 & 14, 2019

NOTE: There is no possible way to get through all this material in CG. Pray that the Holy Spirit will highlight the parts for you to address with your CG. As a PRIORITY, the starter question, the time in the Word, the role-playing and praying for your one are OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE.

I. Starter question:

Was anyone able to weave a conversation about Creation into a discussion with a co-worker, a neighbor or friend, or even “your one” this week? (It is important we ask this question repetitively this series, not so we can put a notch in our belt, but to prompt our people out of their deep love for Christ to share the Good News as ambassadors)

II. Discussion of Scripture:

When we left **The Story** last week, Adam and Eve were together in Eden and in harmony with each other as well as every other living thing and completely free of pain, suffering, sickness, and death. As we pick it back up today, we will see that something goes very wrong. While on the surface it may seem like the original sin was a minor act, in reality it was high treason against a Holy God and its aftershocks are still being felt today. Let’s take a close look at the passage and see how the fall is a major part of “The Story”.

ACT ONE

Genesis 2:15-17 ¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Genesis 2:25 ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 3:1-7 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 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 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he

ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

- Why would God put a tree in the Garden with beautiful fruit and then restrict Adam and Eve from eating it? Did your mind, like mine, focus on the restricted tree first as opposed to the statement that they could eat of every other tree? If so, why do you think that is?
- Who is this crafty serpent? And how is he talking? Read the passages **Isaiah 14:12-15** and **Revelation 12:9**. What light does this shed on him?
- What does the serpent ask Eve? What is he implying about God when he asks this question?
- When we are tempted to do wrong how do the thoughts in our mind compare to the question that the serpent asked and its implications? Are they similar? Different?
- How does Eve respond? Was her response correct? What does her response reveal?
- What was the serpent's comeback to Eve's answer? What should she have done? Where was Adam when this was going on (see verse 6)? What should he have done?
- How is a right knowledge and understanding of God's word crucial to our resisting temptation?
- Read **1 John 2:16** and compare it to Eve's observations in **Genesis 3:6**. What does this reveal about how her temptation compares with our worldly desires? How can an awareness of the danger of these desires help us better fight the battle?
- What was the initial effect of eating the fruit? How did this affect Adam and Eve's relationship with each other? With God?
- Does this new awareness go beyond physical nakedness? Would you be ok if the thoughts that you think throughout the day were displayed on the video screen in the worship center for all to see? What does this reveal about the effects of sin?

ACT TWO

Genesis 3:8-19 ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field;

on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree

of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- When God entered the garden what was the first question that he asked? Did he not know where Adam was? Why did he ask that question?
- What was his second/third question? Did he not know what Adam had done? Why did he ask?
- How did Adam and Eve respond to God’s questions? What does this reveal about the effects of sin? How does it apply today?
- What judgment did God pronounce on Eve? Do we see evidence of that judgment today?
- What about his judgment against Adam? Does it still apply today?
- Read the verses from Romans below? What do these verses tell us about sin and how it is still applicable to our lives today?

Romans 5:12 ¹²Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Romans 3:10 ¹⁰as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:23 ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 1:18 ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

ACT THREE

So much bad news, but it’s necessary for us to understand that sin is no small thing. However, are we hopeless? Is there a glimmer of hope in the Genesis passage we just read? Reread **Genesis 3:15** below regarding God’s judgment of the serpent (Satan). What do you see?

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring;

he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

What you are reading is the very first prophecy in the bible about Jesus Christ, and it is found in Genesis right after Adam and Eve sinned! What a great revelation of God’s steadfast love and mercy towards us! A few thousand years later, Jesus made the decision in another garden to submit to the Father’s will instead of his own and ultimately purchased pardon from God’s wrath for all that would believe and place their trust in Him. Read the passages below:

Mark 14:35-36 ³⁵ And going a little farther, he (Jesus) fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.³⁶ And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Hebrews 2:14-15 ¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he (Jesus) himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Romans 6:23 ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

III. Role Playing (again, this is critical to push our people out of their box to equip us all to share the love of Christ so please do not skip this section – Prioritize it):

The Goal: To equip the members of your community group to steer everyday conversations into Gospel conversations. *Note: These might appear “cheesy” to your group and that’s okay! Laugh at the cheesiness, but be quick to point out that it’s important that as believers we know how to create opportunities to share the Gospel.*

Instructions: Below we have provided three different scenarios for you to use in your group. These scenarios can be used however best fits your group. Not sure what to do? Here are a couple ideas:

- Pick one scenario and read the part that is in red. Then, ask your group for ideas of what could be said to steer the conversation toward the Gospel. Then read the rest in order to illustrate one example of what they could say in that scenario.
- Pick two people to come up and act one or more scenarios out in front of the group. They can read straight from the script, however if you could give it to them a few days early so they can be more prepared that would most likely help them feel more comfortable. After they act out each scenario, have a brief discussion with the group about it.
- Split your group into three smaller groups. Give each group a different scenario, and have them pick two people to act them out to their smaller group. Then at the end, have each group share a little about their scenario and what they thought.

Role Play #1—

Frank and Gary work together. One day Frank is getting coffee from the breakroom when Gary walks in.

Gary: Hey Frank! Good morning!

Frank: Oh, hey Gary! How's it going?

Gary: Oh, ya know... it's Monday.

Frank: Yeah, this weekend was crazy! I feel like lately every news alert I get on my phone is filled with more and more bad news.

Gary: Ya, there is a lot of junk going on.

Frank: I gotta be honest, sometimes I get really overwhelmed with it all. There is so much bad that happens in our world.

Gary: Ya, it's pretty bad. I don't understand how it ever got to this point.

Frank: It's heartbreaking, especially when you think about that this world is never what God wanted for us.

Gary: What do you mean?

Frank: The Bible says that God created everything: the earth, the stars, the animals, even humans. And everything was perfect... no death, no natural disasters, no violence, etc. But... it didn't stay that way. God had given the first people, Adam and Eve, one rule. When Adam and Eve decided to disobey that rule, it was sin...that's what the Bible calls anytime we disobey God. When sin entered the world...it was like a disease that spread and affected everything. The worst part? Since God is perfect and without sin...our sin separates us from Him.

Gary: So two people screwed up God's plan?

Frank: No... nothing can do that. God knew all along that it would happen. He knew we would all choose to turn away from him. That everything would be affected by this sin and that there would be nothing we could do to make ourselves right again. That's why he had a plan to send a rescuer. And because of what He did, one day our world will be made new, and we won't have any of this junk anymore.

Gary: So I'll just automatically get to go to this new world one day?

Frank: No, and man, I would love to tell you more about that. I'm about to head to a meeting but would you want to grab some lunch this week?

Gary: Sure. I'd like that. I'll take a look at my schedule and let you know.

Frank: Cool, see ya Gary!

Gary: Bye Frank!

Role Play #2

Lisa and Amy volunteer together at a local organization that provides food to families who can't afford healthy meals. One day they ride together to pick up some food that a grocery store has donated to their cause.

Lisa: Hey Amy! Thanks for driving.

Amy: No problem Lisa! I'm happy to help.

Lisa: So, how's it been going for you guys?

Amy: It's been okay. To be honest, we have been struggling with some stuff that we have seen on the news lately. Just really burdened right now for all the people who have been victims to different acts of violence. Seems to be increasing nowadays.

Lisa: No kidding. There are a lot of bad people out there.

Amy: It's just crazy that we really are no different though.

Lisa: Wait, what? They are horrible people. You and I sacrifice time and money to help people in need. What do you mean we are no different?

Amy: Don't get me wrong, the worldly consequences for what they have done are and should be much different than what you and I face. However, according to the Bible, we have all done wrong things, so no one is a good person. So even though what they do seems so much bigger to us... the wrong things I do are just as bad in God's eyes.

Lisa: So... your saying that no matter how many good things I do, in God's eyes I'm the same as these horrible people we read about?

Amy: Well... yes. Let me explain. When God created the world, everything was perfect. But, the first people, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. The Bible calls this sin. When they did that sin entered the world and affected everything. This sin separates us from God. And the reality? We all have it...and it's impossible to make it go away by doing good things. No matter what we do, the good will never outweigh the bad. But thankfully, there is hope!

Lisa: What is this hope?

Amy: God knew we would disobey, so all along He had a plan to send a rescuer...Jesus! Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross and rose again so that through turning from our sin and believing in him we can go live with God forever in heaven one day...and one day He will restore the world back to what it should be.

Lisa: I don't know... it just seems a little too good to be true. I've never really been much in to the whole Jesus thing.

Amy: Jesus has changed my life and I know He wants to change yours. If you ever want to talk about it more I am here for you. I will never try and pressure you into anything...but if you have questions I would love to be here for you and help answer them.

Lisa: Thanks Amy. I'll think about it and let you know.

Amy: Maybe we could grab coffee sometime and I can just share my story with you of how I came to believe in Jesus?

Lisa: Ok... I'll look at my calendar and let you know what works for me.

Role Play #3

Melody has just been through a crisis. Her friend Jenn has provided meals, helped around Melody's house, and just plain been there for her. One day Jenn comes over for a little bit to drop off a meal and see how Melody is doing.

Jenn: How are you friend? I pray for you all the time.

Melody: Thanks. I'm taking it one day at a time right now. I'm pretty lost on what to do most days.

Jenn: I can't even imagine. How can I help you today?

Melody: This food amazing. Thank you. You have done so much.

Jenn: I know you have been around a lot of people. I hope that they have been encouraging to you.

Melody: Ya, you know...some people don't really know what to say, but that's okay. I know they are just trying to love on me.

Jenn: Something I hear a lot in situations is people saying that it's all part of God's plan. Has anyone said that to you?

Melody: No, but I always see stuff like that on Instagram. To be honest? It hurts to think about. Why would it be God's plan for this tragedy to happen to me?

Jenn: People mean well... and while it's true that God has a plan, and nothing surprises him, to just say to someone that a tragedy is part of God's plan isn't entirely accurate.

Melody: What do you mean?

Jenn: Well....God created everything, and when He did this world was perfect. No death, no sickness, no yucky stuff at all. This is what He wanted for us. But the first humans did what we all do...they disobeyed God. The Bible calls this sin and when it happened it spread around, affecting everyone and everything. Even though this broke God's heart and is never what he wanted....He knew it would happen. From the beginning, He had a plan in place to send a rescuer...Jesus. Jesus would do what you and I never could do on our own. He lived a perfect life and gave himself up as a sacrifice for us. When he rose from the dead he conquered sin and death once and for all and now if we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus He will save us from that sin. And even though horrible things still happen, we can find comfort in knowing that he does have a plan. But this isn't a plan that means He wanted you to go through horrible things... instead, he makes a promise that even when we suffer hard things, He doesn't waste our suffering. He uses it to grow us and shape us and ultimately for our good.

Melody: I hadn't thought about it like that before.

Jenn: I am always here if you ever want to talk more. I love you Melody, and God loves you too.

Melody: Thanks Jenn. And thank you for all you've done for me.

IV. Prayer Time:

Pray that the Spirit will reveal any area of your life that you have not submitted to God's will and where sin may be present. Pray that our entire church will be humbly submitted to God's will in our lives personally and corporately.

"Pray for your one." As you saw the last two weekends, in the worship center for this entire series, we will be writing the names of "our one". We are asking every person in our church to be praying for one person who lives in the Edmond, OKC, Guthrie area who needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this six-week study, we are asking each person to think of a co-worker, a neighbor or family member who lives locally and pray for their salvation and an opportunity to share your story with them. As a CG, it may be intimidating for a younger believer to share initials (JM or WM) or share first names (John or Mary), and may take a few weeks to get there spiritually, but lead your CG to this place. Collect these names and pray for these by name as a CG over the next four weeks. We will have opportunities to write these names on the wall on the back of the Worship Center, as well.

It is critical for you to take time to pray for your "ones". Thank you for seeking unity as the body of Henderson Hills to be part of this "all church" study.

The following contains a devotional message from Charles Spurgeon that speaks to our necessary attitude towards sin.

Sinful Beyond Measure

. . . Sin . . . Sinful beyond measure.

Romans 7:13

Beware of thinking lightly of sin. At the time of conversion, the conscience is so tender that we are afraid of the slightest sin. Young converts have a holy timidity, a godly fear of offending God. But sadly very soon the fine bloom upon these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world: The sensitive plant of young piety turns into a willow in later life, too pliable, too easily yielding.

It is sadly true that even a Christian may grow by degrees so callous that the sin that once startled him does not alarm him in the least. By degrees men get familiar with sin. The ear in which the cannon has been booming will not notice slight sounds. At first a little sin startles us; but soon we say, "Is it not a little one?" Then there comes another, larger, and then another, until by degrees we begin to regard sin as but a small matter; and this is followed by an unholy presumption: "We have not fallen into open sin. True, we tripped a little, but we stood upright for the most part. We may have uttered one unholy word, but as for most of our conversation, it has been consistent." So we toy with sin; we throw a cloak over it; we call it by dainty names.

Christian, beware of thinking lightly of sin. Take heed in case you fall little by little. Sin a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the grapes? Doesn't the tiny coral insect build a rock that wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual drippings wear away stones? Sin a little thing? It put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head and pierced His heart! It made Him suffer anguish, bitterness, and woe. If you could weigh the least sin in the scales of eternity, you would run from it as from a serpent and abhor the slightest appearance of evil.

Look upon all sin as that which crucified the Savior, and you will see it to be "sinful beyond measure."