

Long Story Short

Reflection Guide

Creation: Genesis 1—11 Exploring the Story, Chapter 1

These opening chapters tell us about the creation of the universe and the beginning of humanity's relationship with God. They tell us how God's good creation came to be stained and marred by sin. And they tell us that since the very beginning, God has had a plan to put the broken pieces of creation back together.

Far from providing a scientific account of how the world was made, the beginning of the Bible tells us about who made the world, why the world was made, and humanity's role in the world.

MONDAY

Read: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Reflect: Repeatedly, we are told that creation is good, and God crowns humanity with the dignity of God's own image (1:28). Where do you see the goodness of creation most clearly? What do you think it means to be created in God's image? How do you see the image of God reflected, albeit imperfectly, in your life and in the lives of those around you?

Respond: Make a list of the things that you learned about God in this story. As you go about your day, take note of the glory of creation, and look for the image of God in others.

TUESDAY

Read: Genesis 2:4-25

Reflect: This story is a picture of creation as it was meant to be. Notice how God is intimately involved with even the smallest details of creation. Do you believe that God is intimately involved with the smallest details of your life? Why or why not? How might your life be different if you increasingly believed in God's involvement in every aspect of your life?

Respond: In prayer, thank God for all the ways God provides for you. Ask God to open your eyes to all the ways God is involved in your life.

WEDNESDAY

Read: Genesis 3

Reflect: After only three chapters, every aspect of creation is spoiled by sin. Yet despite the wide-ranging damage done by sin, grace abounds. What aspect of this story do you find most tragic? Where, if at all, do you see God's grace in this story? Where in the world, if at all, do you see the evidence of both Sin and God's grace most clearly? What about in your own life?

Respond: Reflect on the presence of God's grace in your life. In prayer, thank God for the gift of grace.

THURSDAY

Read: Genesis 4-5

Reflect: As the story continues, the problem of sin grows even deeper. But, notice the rays of hope that shine through these chapters. What hopeful things do you notice in this part of the story? Do you believe that God is still at work today to bring healing and redemption to our world? What evidence do you have for your belief?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to show you where God is active and working to bring healing and redemption to the world. Make a commitment to join God in that work.

FRIDAY

Read: Genesis 6-7

Reflect: Sin and evil continue on a rampage, so God decides to start over, beginning with Noah and his family. If you were in God's position, how would you feel about starting over? Based on what you read, how does God feel about creation prior to the flood? What difference does it make for you, if any, that God feels emotions such as sorrow and grief and that God's heart breaks?

Respond: In prayer, praise God that God understands our emotions because, from the beginning, God has felt them.

SATURDAY

Read: Genesis 8-9

Reflect: In this story, we see one of the distinguishing features of the God of the Bible: God makes covenants—or eternally binding agreements. Are you surprised that God would make unconditional, eternally binding agreements that limit God's own power? Why or why not? What might be significant about the fact that God makes the covenant with Noah "and all living creatures"? Based on this story, why do you think God chose to make this covenant?

Respond: Look at Noah's response to the gift of dry land (8:20), and think about your own responses to God's blessings in your life. Make a list of three things that make you want to worship God.

SUNDAY

Read: Genesis 10-11

Reflect: In the midst of this genealogy, or list of ancestors, of Abram and Sarai (the heroes of next week's stories), we read about the Tower of Babel, an attempt by human beings to remain in one place and to build a tower that reached the heavens. What was the problem with the Tower of Babel? What similarities, if any, do you see with the story you read in Genesis 3?

Respond: Make a list of the questions you have about this week's readings. How could you get answers to your questions? In worship this morning, thank God for all the things you learned about God and creation this week.

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