

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE CENTER OF THE STORY:
A GENESIS SERIES

January 15, 2023

GENESIS: Center of the Story

Welcome to the Discussion Guide - designed to help you think more deeply about the sermon topic as you engage with others through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and real-life application.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is your favorite game to play? Are you competitive or do you play for fun?

➤ EXPLORATION

Have you ever picked up a new game and had to learn how to play it? There are usually directions included that are meant to help you figure out what the game is all about.

Playing a New Game:

- *How does it start?*
- *What's my role?*
- *What's the goal?*
- *What are the rules?*
- *How does it end?*

These questions need to be answered in order to play the game the way it was intended. These same kinds of questions could apply to our lives. Life is full of choices and they are driven by how we answer big questions.

Worldview Questions:

- **Origin** – *Where did I come from?*
- **Identity** – *Who am I?*
- **Meaning** – *What is my purpose?*
- **Morality** – *How should I live?*
- **Destiny** – *What happens when I die?*

Which of these worldview questions have you wondered about?

The universe is not an accident, you and I are not accidents. Gaining a true understanding of this message is not something we can just figure out on our own, God reveals this to us in the book of Genesis. A proper understanding of the first chapters of Genesis will help us make sense of the rest of the Bible and of our lives.

Genesis 1:1 (Read aloud)

The word beginning expresses initiative, God starting the work in the first chapter of a new story.

God = the main character, the center of this entire story.

- God is the one who speaks, acts, creates, makes, calls, blesses, finishes, etc.

Created = a word used only about God in Old Testament

- God creates and is purposeful in creation

Genesis 1:2 (Read aloud)

Theological Starting Point of Genesis by Allen P. Ross

1. Genesis reveals the Sovereignty of the God of creation
2. Genesis lays the foundation for God's word to His people
3. Genesis reveals the activity of God in redemption

Theologian Walter Brueggemann says,

“The God who creates is the one who can transform any circumstance of chaos into an ordered context where fruitfulness, blessing, prosperity and well-being are obtainable.”

Where do you need God to bring order, fruitfulness, blessing, prosperity or well-being into your life? Be specific.

The Days of Creation

Day 1 The Creation of Light vv.3-5

Day 2 Separation of Water and Sky vv.6-8

Day 3 Fertility on Earth & Gathering of Sea vv.9-13

Day 4 Creation of the Sun, Moon & Stars vv.14-19

Day 5 Creation of Life in the Skies & Seas vv.20-23

Day 6 Creation of Life on the Land & Humans vv.24-31

Genesis 1:26-28 (Read aloud)

At the end of each of the first five days, God says what he made is “good”, however after day six when God created human beings he sees that it was “very good”.

Why do you think this distinction is important?

At least four times we are told that humans are made in the image or likeness of God. Humans are created beings. This is important to remember when we are tempted to think of ourselves as more powerful than we actually are.

Being Human ‘In The Image of God’

1. Representation: humans are created to represent the Creator (God) in the world.
2. Reflection: humans reflect the nature and character of the Creator (God) in the world.

Every human being, male or female, has dignity because they are created in the image of God. Each person is a demonstration that life is sacred. Every attempt to dehumanize, devalue, or degrade a human being is an assault on the image of God.

We are created to reflect God’s nature and character in the world. We are not the definers of good and evil, God is! We are designed to live under his benevolent, all wise rule as we reflect his goodness to those around us.

What are some of the ways you reflect God in your daily life?

Where do you struggle in being a representation of God?

Genesis 2:1-3 (Read aloud)

On the seventh day, God rested from his work.

What does a typical day of rest look like for you? How often do you take a day to rest?

The Creation story in Genesis sets the stage for everything throughout history. This is the story of God at the center of everything:

- God at the center of creation
- God at the center of history
- God at the center of our lives
- God at the center of our family
- God at the center of our friendships
- God at the center of every decision we make
- God at the center of our world
- God at center of the future

In which of these areas is it difficult for you to trust God? Why?

➤ TAKE AWAY

Implications for IDENTITY: Who God says that I am is the most important thing about me, not how I feel, or what I want/desire.

Implications for LIFE: We have been created with purpose and meaning. And there is truth to be understood and obeyed. Our decisions matter, the voices we listen to guide our lives. God has spoken, so let’s listen and follow His ways.

Implications for WORK / SCHOOL: The story of God is not just about the ‘spiritual’ or ‘religious’ parts of life. This story is all encompassing. What we do matters, our occupation is for His glory.

Take some time to pray for one another committing to keep God in the center of your life this week.