

GOD'S OPPOSITION

SESSION 5



SMALL GROUP SERIES

FOUNDATIONS

THE SALVATION ARMY - USA EAST

"TO BE SURE THERE IS NO PATH THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT DETOURS. BUT DETOURS, ROUNDABOUTS, AND IMPERFECTIONS, AS THE INCARNATION'S SETTING STRAIGHT OF OUR SIDE-TRACKED HUMANITY MAKES CLEAR, ARE THE PATHS USED BY THE SPIRIT TO TAKE US HOME."

~ LEN SWEET

GOD'S OPPOSITION

God's story is not a short one; from the foundations of creation to present day it was, is, and will be present. As you begin this Foundations study pray for God to give you the ability to see His big picture. In spending time together talking about God's desire to be involved in our lives, may He move among your group, blessing your discussion and your study of His Word.

Watch the DVD

Please watch the video about God's story, and take time to fill in the blanks and discuss the broad events in His story.

The Fall

Genesis 2:9, 16-17

⁹ 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.

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 from it you will certainly die."

Group Discussion

Read Genesis 3 from the Jewish Publication Society (JPS) translation.

The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame. Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: 'You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die, but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad." When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths.

They heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." Then he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" The man said, "The woman you put at my side — she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said

to the woman, "what is this you have done!" The woman replied, "the serpent duped me, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the serpent,

"Because you did this, more cursed shall you be than all cattle and all the wild beasts: On your belly you shall crawl and dirt shall you eat All the days of your life.

GOD'S OPPOSITION

I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your offspring and hers; They shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel."

And to the woman he said, "I will make most severe Your pangs in childbearing; In pain shall you bear children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

To Adam he said, "Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, 'you shall not eat of it, 'Cursed be the ground because of you; By toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life: Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you. But your food shall be the grasses of the field; By the sweat of your brow Shall you get bread to eat, Until you return to the ground—For from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. And the Lord God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, "now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

Discussion Questions

1. _____ and _____ must exist, as knowledge of these would come from eating the fruit.
2. If Adam and Eve were _____ while naked, they may have only known of good, but when eating the fruit they became aware of evil.
3. When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit they did receive _____; a full understanding of what God knew.

This understanding was not intended for human comprehension as it would then make humanity think they are self-reliant, self-sufficient, thus, fully autonomous. With this new knowledge, humanity would no longer fear the Lord for who He is, and from whom the beginning of wisdom comes (Proverbs 1:7).

4. The tree of life was _____ and hence mortal life would end in death.
5. Expulsion from the _____ resulted in toiling for sustenance.
6. _____ would be painful, and the safe refuge of the garden was also denied.
- Adam and Eve would now live in a dangerous world, a good world as God described by God in Genesis 1, but dangerous according to laws of nature.
7. The biggest consequence was being separated from _____ with God.

GOD'S OPPOSITION

Sin

Definition: 'transgression of divine law, any deliberate or willful act in violation to a religious or moral principle, or a fault.'

1. Adam and Eve took hold of their own _____, and did not place their faith and trust in the one who made them – a deliberate act in violation to God's law.

Proverbs 5:22;

²² *The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast.*

John 8:34;

³⁴ *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.*

Isaiah 53:6

⁶ *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Group Discussion

1. We each have an understanding of sin, and maybe terms about sin, like sins of co-mission or omission. In your group, I would like you to share your understanding of sin and how sin is demonstrated in everyday lives.
2. Read Psalm 14:1-3. What is your understanding of the concept of the transmission to all humanity of Adam and Eve's 'original sin'?

For more reading material on this topic reference pgs. 61-63 of the Handbook of Doctrine at the following site:
<http://salvationist.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/sastory.pdf>

God's Opposition: Satan

1. It is believed that Satan was an _____ in God's heavenly court.
2. Satan fell from heaven after trying to place himself above _____.

GOD'S OPPOSITION

Group Discussion

1. Name and describe those present in God's Divine Court
1 Kings 22:19-23, Job 1-2, Isaiah 6
2. After reading Job chapters 1 and 2, what is the role of Satan (not viewing him through New Testament lenses)? Think of a court of law!
See also Zechariah 3:1-2, and 1 Chronicles 21:1.
3. Is Satan's role in the Old Testament inherently evil, or is he merely being a tester on behalf of God?
4. In the New Testament, Satan is called a devil, evil one, prince of demons, dragon, ancient serpent, Beelzebub, an accuser and enemy. What is Satan's attitude towards humanity? (1 Peter 5:8)
5. What is Satan's attitude to God? (Acts 26:16-18)

Satan's Authority & Power:

1. We as Christians need to know the _____ of his power and authority.
2. Satan is limited by God and can only exert the _____ given to him.

Overestimation of Satan's Power

Nigel Wright in *The Satan Syndrome*, states "The vitality of the devil is parasitic and his strength substantially drawn from humanity ... The power that the devil has in himself is far less than we might imagine and far more dependent on that which mankind gives him."

Underestimation of Satan's Power

1. Many Christians rationalize away the concept of a personified evil presence to be psychological problems or coping mechanisms.

Satan's Helpers: Demons

1. Robert Linthicum in *City of God, City of Satan* suggests that, 'Every city has an angel who broods over it. These angels infuse and dominate the principalities and powers, systems and structures, people groups and individuals of that city. There is that spiritual presence – either angelic or demonic (or displaying elements of both).'

Cosmic Battle

1. We are in a _____, minute by minute battle against evil.
2. He would so like to be Lord of our lives so he can tell God He has lost another _____.

Ephesians 6:12 states, *"We are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age."*

Application

In this session the topic of sin and temptation was discussed. Consider the following quote and scripture as it relates to the topic of temptation.

"You cannot stop the birds from flying over your head but you can stop them from making a nest in your hair."
- Martin Luther

1. What do you think this quote means?

Read Luke 4:1-13 together as a group and discuss these questions.

2. Is temptation a sin? How can you be sure?
3. Why does God allow temptation?

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way to escape also, that you may be able to endure it." -1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

4. Do I lose my salvation and witness if I give into temptation and sin?

The quote on the cover page for this session suggests that God can use our 'imperfections' with the help of the Spirit to bring us home.

5. How has God used your journey to lead you to where you are today?
6. Are there parts of your story that God has used to speak to others?

Think and then pray for a specific opportunity coming this week in your schedule where you might be able to share your story with someone who is searching and needs a nudge toward God.