

FOR RETIRED ADULTS

# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## LifeVENTURES



# God's Story

LEADER GUIDE  
SUMMER 2013

LifeWay | Adults

# MEET THE WRITERS

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Bible Studies for Life: *Life Ventures Leader Guide* is designed for teachers of vocationally retired adults ages 65 and up. We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. The 2000 statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* is our doctrinal guideline.

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# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

*Where Life Connects to God's Word*

Bible Studies for Life addresses basic adult life needs as they relate to 15 biblical concepts (see list).

## **JUNE–AUGUST: God's Story**

### **Biblical Concepts:**

- **God**—God the Father acts out of love, grace, and compassion and desires the best for His creation.
- **Creation, Sovereignty, & Providence**—God established natural laws to cause His creation to function with order, predictability, and splendor.
- **Humanity (Self)**—All people are created in the image of God to love and worship Him, possessing personality, intellect, creativity, self-consciousness, and self-determination.
- **Rebellion & Sin**—Because all have sinned, everyone is fallen and lost; thus sin has resulted in alienation, condemnation, enslavement, depravity, and death.
- **Jesus**—Jesus was born of a virgin, died on a cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven so that we can be saved.
- **Salvation**—God offers forgiveness of sin to those who trust in Christ, who suffered and died in our place to atone for sin.
- **Church & Kingdom**—God's reign over His creation is made visible through the church, expressed in the lives of believers as they join together in faith and fellowship.
- **Time & Eternity**—God works within time to accomplish His purposes. Someday Jesus will return to raise the dead, judge the world, punish the lost, reward the redeemed, and establish His eternal kingdom.

**GOD**

**JESUS**

**HOLY SPIRIT**

**REVELATION &  
AUTHORITY (BIBLE)**

**CREATION,  
SOVEREIGNTY, &  
PROVIDENCE**

**FAMILY**

**COMMUNITY &  
WORLD**

**CHURCH & KINGDOM**

**HUMANITY (SELF)**

**SALVATION**

**DISCIPLESHIP &  
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

**ETHICS & MORALITY**

**REASON & FAITH**

**REBELLION & SIN**

**TIME & ETERNITY**



What is Sunday School? Sunday School is the foundational strategy for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for building Great Commission Christians through open Bible study groups that invite people to discover the truth of God's Word and connect with others through fellowship and ministry.

## Planning with Others Before the Study

As you prepare to begin each new study theme, you will find suggestions for a monthly leadership meeting (pp. 15, 67, 109) to guide department directors and teachers to (1) discuss ways their classes can develop and strengthen relationships; (2) review and plan for the series of lessons in the study theme;\* (3) identify ministry opportunities to members and prospects, and service opportunities for members within the larger church body, and (4) think of ways leaders and members can be on mission for Christ outside the church walls.

\*See page 86 for a reproducible Sunday School Session Plan Sheet designed to help you prepare to lead Bible study each week.

**How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:**  
Understand that you were made for a relationship with God and how sin severed that relationship.

**WEEK OF JUNE 9**  
**God Chooses a People**  
Gen. 12:1-13:17

This lesson shows God's first steps in bringing people into a right relationship with Him. God takes the initiative to establish a relationship; our responsibility should be faith and obedience.

**How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:**  
Decide whether you are willing to fully trust and obey God.

**WEEK OF JUNE 23**  
**God Instructs His People**  
Exod. 20:14, 17, 24-48

This lesson shows the terms by which the Israelites were to live as God's people.

**How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:**  
Live in obedience to God's commandments.

**WEEK OF JUNE 30**  
**God Dwells Among His People**  
Exod. 25:30-31, 39-41; 40:34-38

This lesson shows God's desire to make His presence and glory known to His people.

**How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:**  
Live with a constant awareness of God's presence in your life.

**PLANNING WITH OTHERS BEFORE THE STUDY**

**FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS:** This month, enlist someone to plan a class fellowship, keeping in mind possible financial and physical limitations. Enlist others to invite attendees and visitors to the fellowship, offering transportation if necessary.

**FOCUS ON BIBLE STUDY:** Note this summer's format of one study theme in three parts. Follow the progression of all 12 lessons. Point out the study theme posters in the pack will support this progression as each study theme poster connects to the other. Encourage leaders to find space on walls or backs of chairs to display the many large pack items that will support this unit.

**FOCUS ON SERVICE:** Point out from the June 9 Bible commentary (p. 28) that "You will be a blessing" is actually a command to "be a blessing." Consider ways senior classes can be blessings to the church staff this summer. Perhaps they could provide meals to the youth and children's pastors who are especially busy during the summer. Consider ways seniors can help with VBS.

**FOCUS ON MISSION:** Your church may be sending crews on mission trips in the coming months.

## Preparing to Teach Through Personal Bible Study

Teachers who desire to see their learners spiritually transformed must first commit to move toward their own personal spiritual transformation. Preparing to teach God's Word to others must begin with teachers asking God to speak to them personally about their own walk with the Lord. This is accomplished through prayer and personal study of the Scripture passages and Bible commentary in each lesson. The interactive suggestions/questions in this section challenge teachers to examine God's Word, identify personal attitudes and actions that need to be changed or developed in light of the teachings they discover, and through prayer and communion with the Holy Spirit make commitments that move them toward personal spiritual transformation.

## Teaching the Lesson

Note these three elements for leading adults to encounter God in His Word during a 60-minute session (45-minute group Bible study; 15-minute department period).

- **Teaching Plan:** The teaching plan is located in the margins of each lesson right alongside the Bible commentary, allowing easy access from the teaching plan to the commentary without turning multiple pages. The teaching plan (1) allows for a high degree of group interaction, (2) contains numbered steps, (3) calls for learners to use the personal study guide as part of the learning process, and (4) uses a variety of creative teaching/learning activities that focus on "How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life." Also included is a list of supplies and teaching aids required for utilizing the teaching plan.

- **Discussion Options: Life Impact Plus:** These optional questions follow each Scripture step in the teaching plan. Use as many or as few questions as desired with classes that enjoy more discussion of how the lesson can impact learners' lives.


- **Department Period Suggestions:** This section, found on the last page of each lesson, suggests ideas and hymns to use for Sunday Schools that begin with a department period. The ideas could also be used by a class.

**WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT**

The biblical story begins with the eternal God's creating the world and the first human beings. God created people with the capacity for fellowship with Him, but they chose to rebel against Him and suffered the consequences.

**HOW THIS LESSON CAN IMPACT YOUR LIFE**

Understand that you were made for a relationship with God and how sin severed that relationship.



**TEACHING PLAN**

**Teaching the Lesson**

Find EXTRA! help online at: [www.lifeventures.com/extra](http://www.lifeventures.com/extra).

*Needed for the Session*

**BIBLE COMMENTARY**

**Preparing to Teach Through Personal Bible Study**

Have you ever wondered how all the different parts of the Bible fit together? Do you find yourself confused as to whether all that "stuff" in the Old Testament is relevant for Christians? For the

**TEACHING PLAN**  
CONTINUED

lessons individually and as a group.

**STEP 2**  
**God Creates**  
(Gen. 1:1, 26-27)

Declare every good story opens by introducing the main characters and theme. In God's Story, those are found in Genesis 1:1, 26-27. Invite a volunteer to read those verses.

Guide learners to explore the difference between opening a story with "In the beginning" and "Once upon a time." Evaluate the first essential truth that must be recognized about God's Story. (It's fact, not fiction or

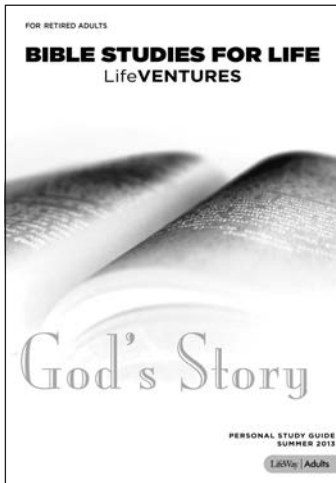
**BIBLE COMMENTARY**  
CONTINUED

Psalm 24:1 reminds us, "The earth and everything in it, and its inhabitants, belong to the LORD." At the same time, need to remember: God is above creation; both eternal and inspiring. Creation is subordinate to the Creator. As such, creation is finite, limited, and the object of God's intentions.

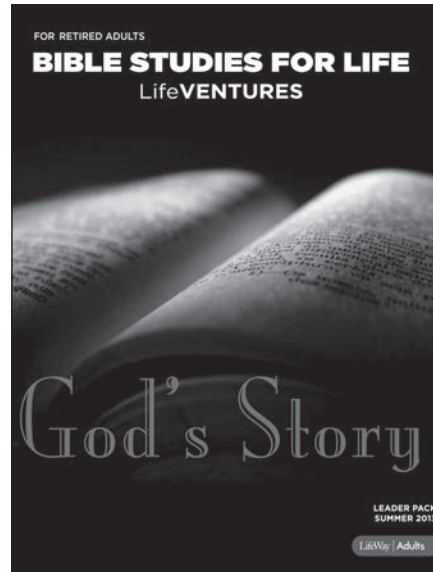
Where do people fit into God's creative plan? God saved the creation for last. From the outset, people were to be the achievement of God's creation. Only people were created in the image and likeness of God, terms that speak to people's ability to relate to God in a personal way. Additionally, only people given the high responsibility and privilege of ruling over creation (Gen. 1:26, 28). Specifically, people were to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and the livestock of the earth. The terms *sea*, *sky*, and *earth* pass the created realm known to people. The sea represents everything beneath people, the sky everything above people, and the earth everything before people. In assigning humankind awesome responsibility, God declared people's privilege before Him, a status of superiority over the rest of creation. To understand God's Story, we must grasp the privileged status of humankind.

\*See teaching plan, p. 19.1 Genesis 1:27 contains a phrase

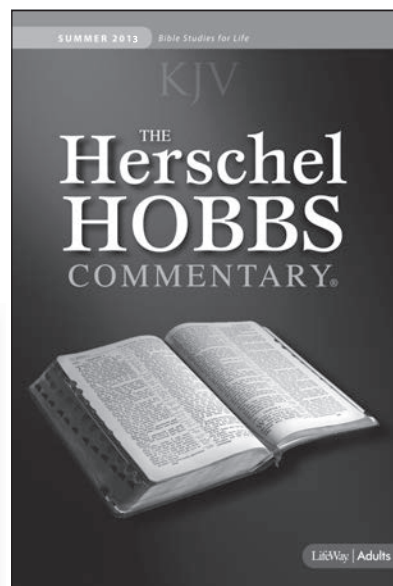
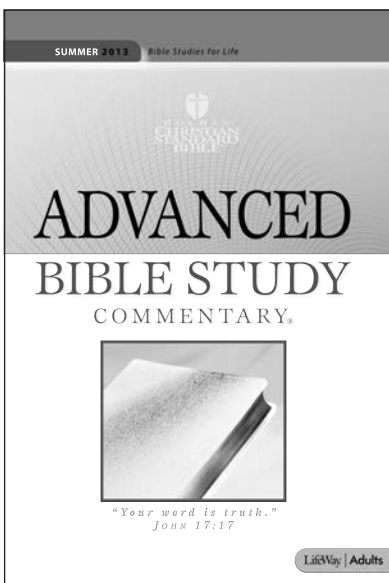
# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR LEADERS USING BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE CURRICULUM



The **Personal Study Guide** includes a Bible commentary for each lesson, study questions, and interactive questions designed to help learners prepare and participate in the group Bible study session. The teaching plan in the leader guide suggests ways to use the personal study guide in the group study.

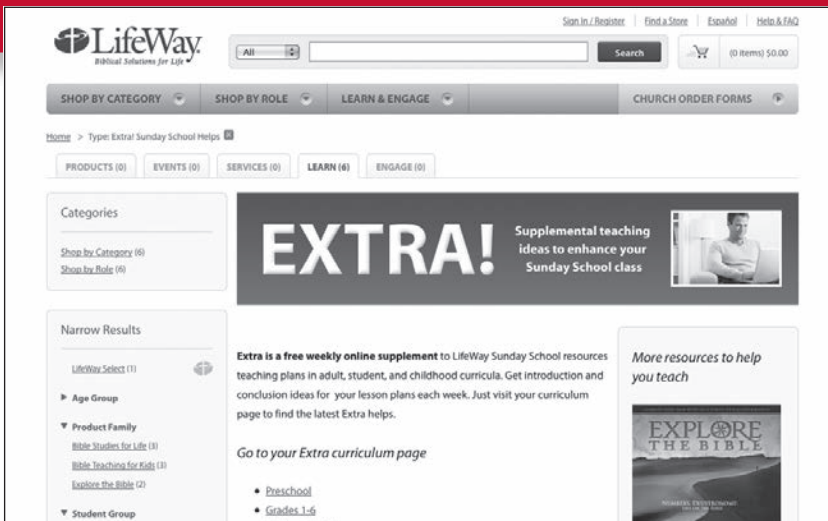


The **Leader Pack** includes a variety of posters, charts, and reproducible handouts for use with the basic teaching plan. It also includes a CD-ROM for your computer that contains lesson outlines, commentary, illustrations, teaching plans, and other useful information to help you in leading your group in Bible study.



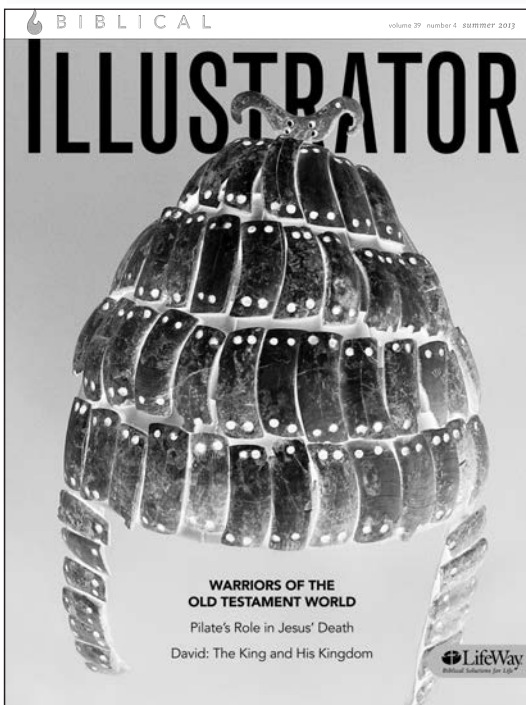
*The Herschel Hobbs Commentary* contains expository treatment of each lesson passage in the adult Bible Studies for Life curriculum. The comments are based on the King James Version but take into consideration other Bible translations as well as the meanings of Greek and Hebrew words. *The Herschel Hobbs Commentary* is available as a downloadable resource. Purchase at [www.lifeway.com/HobbsCommentary](http://www.lifeway.com/HobbsCommentary).

*Advanced Bible Study Commentary* contains expository treatment of each lesson passage in the adult Bible Studies for Life curriculum. The comments are based on the Holman Christian Standard Bible®. This commentary also contains interactive features to help leaders and learners search and apply the Scriptures for themselves. *Advanced Bible Study Commentary* is available as a downloadable resource. Purchase at [www.lifeway.com/AdvancedCommentary](http://www.lifeway.com/AdvancedCommentary).



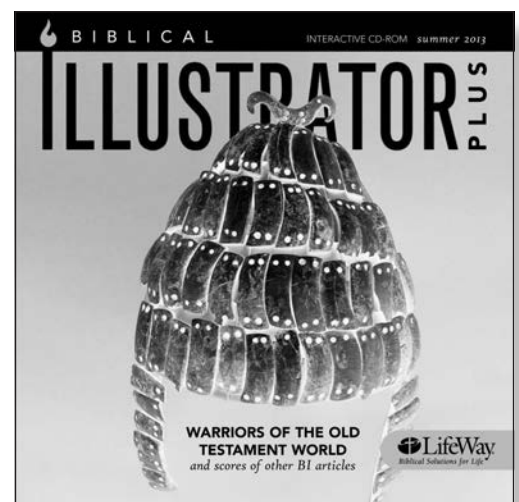
## Online Resources

The teaching help online at [www.lifeway.com/extra](http://www.lifeway.com/extra) provides current illustrations and fresh ideas to supplement the CD-ROM that is contained in your *Life Ventures Leader Pack*. Illustrations, stories, and ideas for supplementing teaching plans, enhancing personal and family devotional times, and enriching missions involvement are at your fingertips with the click of a mouse.



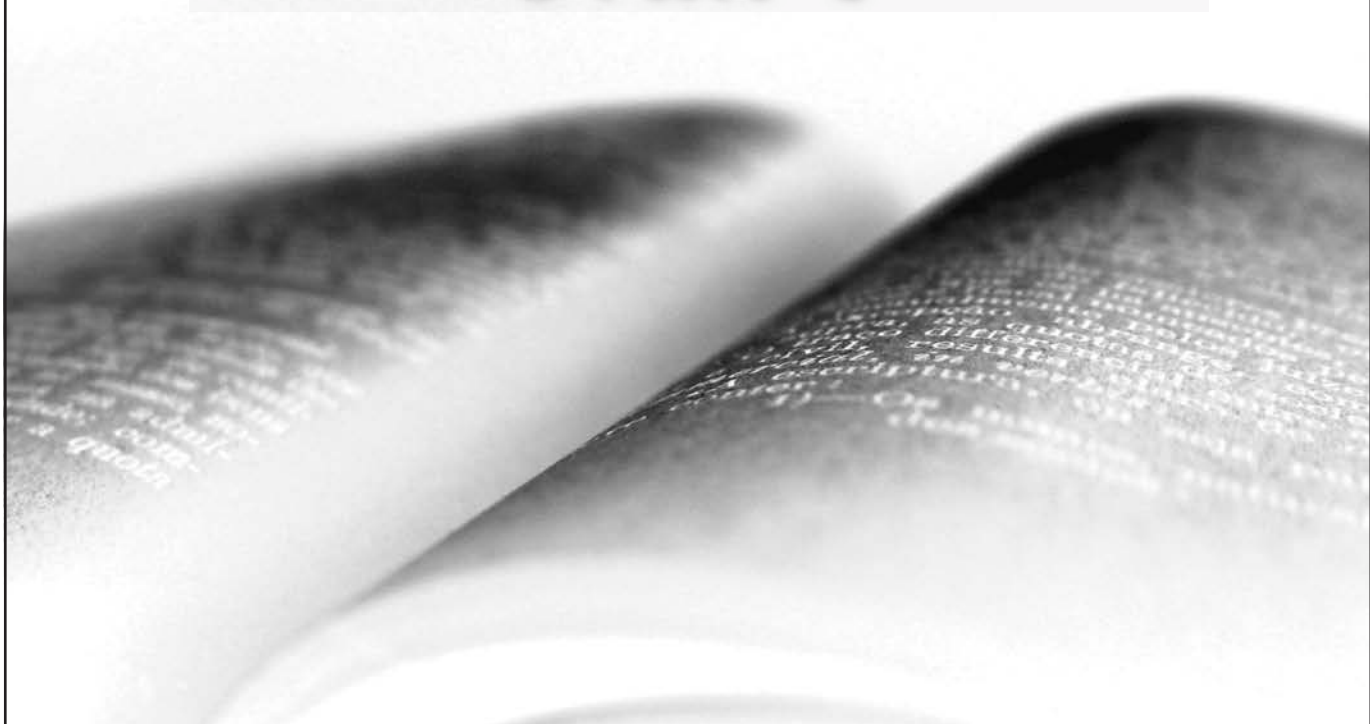
*Biblical Illustrator* is a magazine that supports Bible Studies for Life curriculum by offering background and supplemental research for each week's Scripture text. Using scholarly research and breathtaking photography, the articles explore archaeology, biblical culture and people, geography, word studies, and history. The magazine also offers two special features each quarter: a book review of a current Bible study resource and a centerspread, which visually explores one special topic for the quarter. *Biblical Illustrator* is a premier resource for in-depth Bible study. "The New Testament Collection" is a three-part series of PowerPoint® presentations covering the life of Christ, the early church, and the apostle Paul. Each set contains over 120 images with explanations and full Scripture references in the "notes" section. The three presentations are part of The *Biblical Illustrator* Photo Gallery and are available as individual purchasable downloads at [www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator](http://www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator).

*Biblical Illustrator Plus* is a quarterly CD-ROM that takes the printed magazine a step further by providing not only the complete content of the current *Biblical Illustrator* but also relevant past articles from the *Biblical Illustrator* archives. This easy-to-use resource lists all the articles available for a particular Sunday lesson for Bible Studies for Life. These articles can be printed or simply read on the screen.





# GOD'S STORY: PART 1



## WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

The Bible is made up of many stories but they all fit together to tell one story—God’s story. This 13-week study will help learners understand the Bible’s story, their place in the story, and its implications for their lives.

## WHY THIS STUDY IS IMPORTANT

Most people are familiar with at least a few Bible stories. They may not, however, see how the seemingly disparate parts of the Bible fit together. George Guthrie comments on why this is significant: “When a person doesn’t get the story, all the little stories, and psalms, and parables have no point of reference by which we can understand them. Thus, we are going to have to teach people the story if we are going to reverse current trends in biblical illiteracy” (*Read the Bible for Life* [Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011], 12). This study is important because it can lead adults not only to understand the biblical story’s overarching message but also to encounter its Author on a personal level.

# STUDY THEME AT A GLANCE

## WEEK OF JUNE 2

### God Begins the Story

Genesis 1:1,26-27; 2:15-17; 3:6-7,14-19,23-24

The biblical story begins with the eternal God creating the world and the first human beings. God created people with the capacity for fellowship with Him, but they chose to rebel against Him and suffered the consequences.

#### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

Understand that you were made for a relationship with God and how sin severed that relationship.

## WEEK OF JUNE 9

### God Chooses a People

Genesis 12:1-7; 15:5-8,13-17

This lesson shows God's first steps in bringing people into a right relationship with Him. God takes the initiative to establish a relationship; our responsibility should be faith and obedience.

#### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

Decide whether you are fully willing to trust and obey God.

## WEEK OF JUNE 16

### God Delivers His People

Exodus 3:7-10; 12:12-13,29-31; 14:5-6,13-14,21,26

God delivered His people from oppression and bondage in Egypt.

#### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

Affirm that God compassionately expresses His power on behalf of His people.

## WEEK OF JUNE 23

### God Instructs His People

Exodus 20:1-4,7-8,12-17; 24:4-8

This lesson shows the terms by which the Israelites were to live as God's people.

#### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

Live in obedience to God's commands.

## WEEK OF JUNE 30

### God Dwells Among His People

Exodus 26:30-33; 29:43-46; 40:34-38

This lesson shows God's desire to make His presence and glory known to His people.

#### How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

Live with a constant awareness of God's presence in your life.

## PLANNING WITH OTHERS BEFORE THE STUDY

**FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS:** This month, enlist someone to plan a class fellowship, keeping in mind possible financial and physical limitations. Enlist others to invite attendees and visitors to the fellowship, offering transportation if necessary.

**FOCUS ON BIBLE STUDY:** Note this summer's format of one study theme in three parts. Follow the progression of all 13 lessons. Point out that the study theme posters in the pack will support this progression as each study theme poster connects to the other. Encourage leaders to find space on walls or backs of chairs to display the many large pack items that will support this unit.

**FOCUS ON SERVICE:** Point out from the June 9 Bible commentary (p. 28) that "You will be a blessing" is actually a command to "be a blessing." Consider ways senior classes can be blessings to the church staff this summer. Perhaps they could provide meals to the youth and children's ministers who are especially busy during the summer. Consider ways seniors can help with VBS.

**FOCUS ON MISSION:** Your church may be sending groups on mission trips in the coming months. Obtain lists of names and specific prayer requests so your seniors can support these missions with their attendance, and if they cannot attend, with their prayers.

# GOD BEGINS THE STORY

**BACKGROUND PASSAGE:** Genesis 1:1–3:24

**FOCAL PASSAGES:** Genesis 1:1,26-27; 2:15-17; 3:6-7,14-19,23-24

## SCRIPTURE OUTLINE

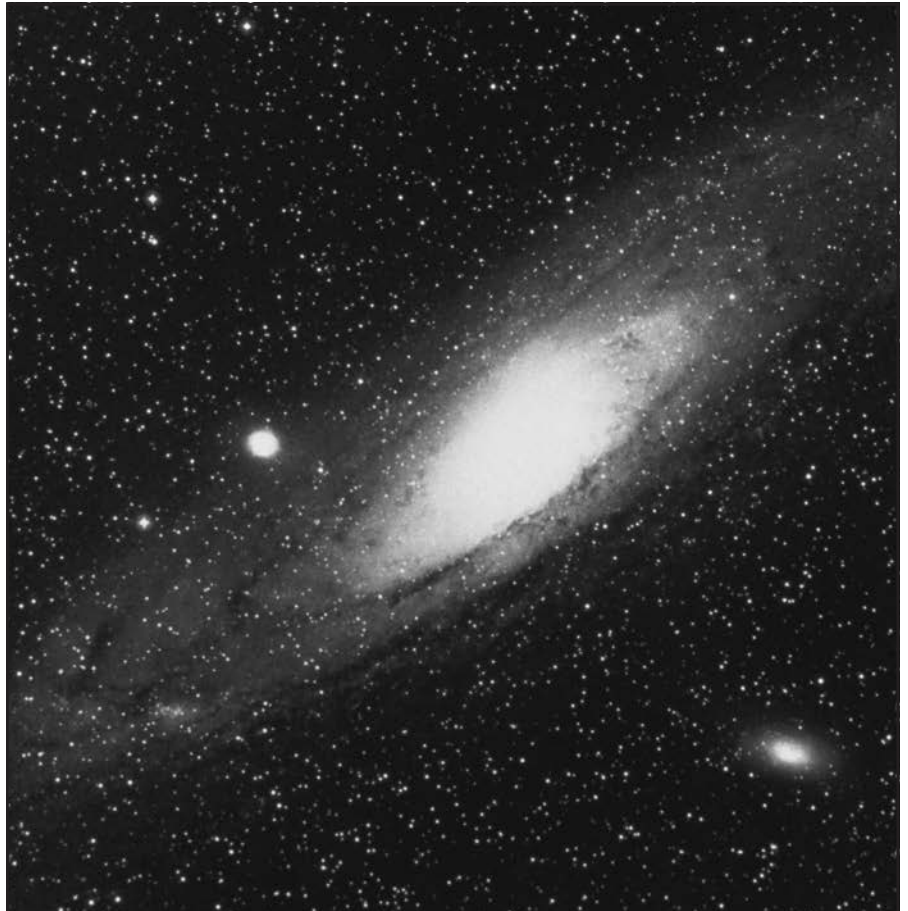
- God Creates  
(Gen. 1:1,26-27)
- Humanity Rebels  
(Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6-7)
- Sin Has Consequences  
(Gen. 3:14-19,23-24)

## WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

The biblical story begins with the eternal God creating the world and the first human beings. God created people with the capacity for fellowship with Him, but they chose to rebel against Him and suffered the consequences.

## HOW THIS LESSON CAN IMPACT YOUR LIFE

Understand that you were made for a relationship with God and how sin severed that relationship.



## TEACHING PLAN

### Teaching the Lesson

Find EXTRA! help online at:  
[www.lifeway.com/extra](http://www.lifeway.com/extra).

#### *Needed for the Session*

- PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**, pen or pencil for each learner
- Marker board or large sheets of paper, markers

## BIBLE COMMENTARY

### Preparing to Teach Through Personal Bible Study

Have you ever wondered how all the different parts of the Bible fit together? Do you find yourself confused as to whether all that “stuff” in the Old Testament is relevant for Christians? For the next 13 weeks we are going on a journey, a pilgrimage to discover God’s Story in the Bible. This lesson is the first installment of the series, but every lesson is bound intricately to the subject of God’s Story. Think of each lesson as a piece in a puzzle. We will examine each piece carefully, but each piece’s ultimate significance is discovered only as it interlocks with the other pieces, providing us a picture of God. After all, the Bible is God’s Story.

The biblical narratives relating God’s Story are accurate and trustworthy accounts of actual historical events. I present this lesson and those that follow with full confidence in the veracity of God’s Word. From the opening scene of God’s creation in Genesis to the final curtain in Revelation, the Bible relates God’s Story.

**Someone sees you with your Bible and asks, “Why the Bible?” You briefly summarize God’s Story by saying ...**

God Creates		
KJV	Genesis 1:1,26-27	HCSB
<p><sup>1</sup>In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ..... <sup>26</sup>And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. <sup>27</sup>So God created man in his <i>own</i> image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.</p>		<p><sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ..... <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.</p>

God’s Story begins with a summary statement. Genesis 1:1 summarizes the relationship between God and everyone and everything else. If this first verse of the Bible were reduced to its shortest form, the verse would read **God created**. The verb translated **created**, meaning “to bring into existence,” only has *God* as its subject in the Hebrew Bible. No one else creates; only God. From the opening statement of the Bible, we learn God is uniquely set above all else, including people, plants, animals, and things. Additionally, we observe God is the first subject of the first verse of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible. This profound truth sets the stage for understanding the entire Bible in all of its parts, namely God is the main subject of the entire Bible.

The phrase **the heavens and the earth** encompasses everything and everyone that is not God. Just as **the heavens and the earth** form the objects of the verb **created**, even so, we can begin to see ourselves as the objects of God’s creative activity.

**STEPS 1,2:**  
**PACK ITEM 1**  
**“Poster: Study Theme 1”**  
Display this poster for the entire quarter. Add to the focal wall display posters for study themes 2 (July 7) and 3 (July 28) to emphasize the grand narrative of God’s Story.

**STEP 1**  
**Introduction**  
• **ASK:** What’s your favorite Bible story and why? If you were to ask people in the grocery store to identify Bible stories, what kind of responses do you think you’d get?

Note many people may know individual Bible stories, but few understand how all the stories fit together to tell one story. State that this summer the class will examine one story, God’s Story, spread over 13 weeks.

**PACK ITEM 1**  
**“Poster: Study Theme 1”**  
Point out the ribbon on the poster, and indicate a common thread tying God’s Story together is God’s continuing activity to bring people into a relationship with Himself.

**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**  
**(p. 11)** Invite a volunteer to read the final paragraph of the **study theme introduction**. Urge learners to accept that as their challenge this summer as they study these



lessons individually and as a group.

## STEP 2 God Creates

(Gen. 1:1,26-27)

Declare every good story opens by introducing the main characters and theme. In God's Story, those are found in Genesis 1:1,26-27. Invite a volunteer to read those verses.

Guide learners to explore the difference between opening a story with "In the beginning" and "Once upon a time." Evaluate the first essential truth that must be recognized about God's Story. (It's fact, not fiction or fairy tale.)

### PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

(pp. 14-15) Request learners identify the main character of God's Story and to state two essential facts about God identified in Genesis 1:1. Assert the Bible declares from the beginning that God is God, and we are not. Explore why that is an essential truth for people to remember in God's Story and their own story.

### PACK ITEM 1

#### "Poster: Study Theme 1"

Once again, draw attention to the ribbon on the poster, and request learners recall the theme running through God's Story. (*God's activity to draw people into a relationship with Himself.*)

Psalm 24:1 reminds us, "The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the LORD." At the same time, we need to remember God is above creation, both eternal and awe-inspiring. Creation is subordinate to the Creator. As such, creation is finite, limited, and the object of God's intentions.

Where do people fit into God's creative plan? God saved His best creation for last. From the outset, people were to be the crowning achievement of God's creation. Only people were created in the **image and likeness** of God, terms that speak to people's capacity to relate to God in a personal way. Additionally, only people were given the high responsibility and privilege of ruling over the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26,28). Specifically, people were to **rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and the livestock and creatures** of the **earth**. The terms **sea, sky, and earth** encompass the created realm known to people. The **sea** represented everything beneath people, the **sky** everything above people, and the **earth** everything before people. In assigning humankind this awesome responsibility, God declared people's privileged status before Him, a status of superiority over the rest of creation, but inferiority to God. To understand God's Story, we must grasp this privileged status of humankind.

**\*(See teaching plan, p. 19.)** Genesis 1:27 contains a phrase important in systematic theology: **the image of God**. The concept of the *image of God* has drawn the attention of scholars worldwide. I remember discussions around the doctoral seminar table in seminary indicating **the image of God** referred to people's wisdom, intelligence, logic, or even people having souls. The concept is rich and perhaps all these suggestions have merit; however, in God's Story, the most pronounced aspect of **the image of God** is people's capacity to relate to God in a special way not available to the **fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, or the livestock and creatures** of the earth. This verse contains the special verb

## D I G G I N G   D E E P E R

**How These Events Fit into God's Grand Story** Today's lesson centers on God as Creator and people as His prime creation. As we begin our look at the "big story" of God's redemptive love, we must begin by establishing the proper relationship between Creator and created. Since God alone creates, He alone stands in a position far superior to any of His creations, including people. Yet God seeks a personal relationship with people. The advent of sin leaves people estranged from God. God graciously intervenes to restore the relationship. In doing so, His great story of redemptive love begins.

**created** three times with reference to humankind. Both the use of this verb that has only God as its subject and the fact it is used thrice bring special attention to people above all the rest of creation. God’s Story is about His love for people and His desire for a special relationship with them. The final line of Genesis 1:27 reminds us how humankind was composed from the beginning of **male and female**. God’s Story includes all people.

**Look into the “mirror” of your mind. Which of the following best describes how it reflects God?**

- Spittin’ Image**     **Close Relative**     **Distant Relative**  
 **Unrelated**

<b>Humanity Rebels</b>		
KJV	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6-7	HCSB
<p>2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.</p> <p>16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:</p> <p>17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make <i>one</i> wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.</p> <p>7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they <i>were</i> naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.</p>	<p>2:15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”</p> <p>.....</p> <p>3:6 Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.</p>	

Analyze how that theme is obvious from the very beginning of His Story.

Request learners pull evidence from Genesis 1:26-27 that God set humanity apart from the rest of creation. Explore what it means to be created in the image of God, adding to the discussion with remarks from the **Bible commentary\* (p. 18)**.

**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**

**(p. 16)** Invite responses to “Think It Through.” Point out a hindrance to fulfilling our God-given role as stewards is forgetting God is God and we are not.

- **ASK:** How does the very beginning of God’s Story keep us from thinking too highly or too lowly of ourselves?

To conclude this section, encourage learners to live each day revering God as set apart and humbly regarding themselves as His prized creation.

**Discussion Options:  
Life Impact Plus**

- What truths must we grasp about God and humanity if we’re going to understand God’s Story? How do we daily live out those truths?
- How does God’s Story from the very beginning answer the question, “Why am I here?”

- What do you want your grandchildren to understand about the world and their place in it? What is your role in helping them gain that understanding?

### STEP 3 Humanity Rebels (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:6-7)

- **SAY:** Besides main characters and a theme, every story includes a conflict. Conflict emerged fairly quickly in God's Story.

Invite a volunteer to read **Genesis 2:15-17**.

Analyze the relationship God was building with humanity. Agree it was a relationship characterized by abundance, provision, blessing, privileges, responsibilities, and freedom. Consider reasons God prohibited eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Use remarks from the **Bible commentary\*** to add to the discussion.

Direct learners to listen for the obvious conflict in God's Story as a volunteer reads **Genesis 3:6-7**.

Call for responses. Evaluate how the three reasons Adam and Eve ate the fruit are indicative of every reason people continue to sin. (It may be helpful to the discussion to relay from the **Bible commentary\*** [p. 21]

Beginning in Genesis 2:4, we encounter a second account of creation. The first account, Genesis 1:1–2:3, focuses on the creation of the world as a whole; the second account, Genesis 2:4-25, focuses on the creation of the first man and woman. Genesis 2:4-14 speaks of the special care God took in forming man out of dust from the ground. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). Apart from God, people have no life. God also took great care in providing the first man a suitable home, **the garden of Eden**, and a suitable vocation, to **work** and to **watch over** the garden. The one thing man lacked initially was "a helper as his complement" (v. 18). God remedied the situation by making woman. The human race had begun in earnest.

God gave to Adam an all-encompassing permission to eat freely of **any tree of the garden**. The full depth, breadth, and width of the garden were at man's disposal. The relationship God was forming with the man was one of blessing and abundance. The riches of God's creation foretold the richness of the relationship He sought with humankind.

In contrast, He gave the couple but one prohibition, not to eat of **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. Eating from this tree enabled people to know **good and evil**, a phrase encompassing "everything from A to Z." Yet, God warned of the devastating consequences of eating from the forbidden tree, "**you will certainly die.**" The literal Hebrew is "dying you will die." Thus the first couple was to live and to work in the garden, to enjoy its fruits and abundance, and to obey God in the matter of not eating from the tree of knowledge. In this most perfect of all environments, people could relate to God in a special way.

**\*(See teaching plan.)** Recently, a student asked me why God prohibited people from eating from **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. My answer was twofold. First, God sought to spare people from the bitterness of knowing evil. People would still learn about good things through their relationship with God. All loving parents want to shelter their children from evil. Second, without choice, people cannot express love. Every time Adam and Eve passed by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they had to make a conscious choice whether to obey God and not eat or to disobey God and eat. The temptation to eat was the promise of godlike knowledge. The advantage of not eating was a close relationship with God. By setting before people one prohibition, God had graciously provided freedom of choice and the capability for people to express love for Him. People could express their love and respect for God by freely choosing to obey His command. Jesus expressed a similar connection between love and obedience in John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commands." We find in 1 John 5:3, "For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. Now His commands are not a burden."



Though surrounded by His abundance, the woman and then the man freely chose to disobey God and to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (3:6). The serpent who deceived Eve is later identified as the Devil and Satan in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. **\*(See teaching plan, p. 20.)** The temptation had three characteristics: **good for food** (an appeal to the appetite), **delightful to look at** (an appeal to the eyes), and **desirable for obtaining wisdom** (an appeal to the intellect). The close affinity of these three characteristics to the Devil's temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13) and John's observation that these three things belong to the world (1 John 2:16) show the overarching unity of God's Story.

Eve **took** and **ate** and **gave** to her husband. Such is the simple vocabulary of the moment when Adam and Eve rebelled against God. Eve had not been made when God first gave the prohibitive command to Adam. Why Adam did not intervene in the dialogue between the serpent and Eve remains a mystery. His failure to speak and his complicity in eating spelled doom for the human race. The serpent had promised eating from the tree would result in their eyes being opened and would make them like God (Gen. 3:5). His words were half truth and half lies. Their eyes ... were **opened**, but the main thing **they knew** was **they were naked**. Ironically, the main thing they came to know, they immediately sought to conceal. **Fig leaves** could cover their physical nakedness, but their spiritual nakedness before God remained exposed. The first couple immediately began to experience spiritual death and all its accoutrements.

Eve was beguiled by the serpent (vv. 1-5). When Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they rebelled against God. Indeed, every sin since then has been a rebellion against God. People today rebel against God by establishing alternate lifestyles other than what God prescribes in His Word. By setting their own standards, being selective in their morality, and choosing to disobey some of God's instructions, people separate themselves farther from God. The warm relationship He seeks is pushed further and further out of the picture. Today as you read this lesson, realize God has given you the freedom of choice. You can choose to obey God or to rebel against Him. Choose to obey God today.

**Most of us, like Adam and Eve, have received far more from God than what He has set off limits to us. Unfortunately, many of us, again like Adam and Eve, all too often turn our attention to what we don't have instead of what we do have. Survey your life over the past couple of weeks. How much of your time and effort would you estimate you have spent focused on what God hasn't given you rather than what He has? \_\_\_\_\_**

three characteristics of the serpent's temptation.)

- **DISCUSS:** What's the big deal about eating a piece of fruit? (Explain that Satan often seeks to take us down with trivial things we don't want to give over to God.) What might those trivial areas be for senior adults?

Declare that Adam and Eve's sin was disregarding what God said and doing things their own way.

- **SAY:** We must let God be God in every area, even ones that seem trivial.

#### **PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**

**(p. 18)** Urge learners to privately consider **"What About Me?"**

Determine the knowledge Adam and Eve gained when they rebelliously ate the fruit. Point out that Genesis 2:25 relates that they were naked but unashamed. Everything looked different when sin entered the picture. Sin marred their sense of peace with God, themselves, and each other.

Conclude by stating that we see from the beginning that we have a choice to work within God's good and perfect will, or to step beyond His boundaries to do what we want. Urge learners to choose obedient devotion to the Lord in every situation, no matter how trivial it may seem.



**Discussion Options:  
Life Impact Plus**

- How have you seen that God’s original plan for humanity to work was actually a blessing? How have you seen sin mess up many of life’s blessings? How can we avoid those messes?
- How are God’s restrictions actually indications of His blessings? How can we demonstrate we appreciate those restrictions?
- Identify specific ways seniors have choices daily to either show loyalty and devotion to God or do things our own way. How can we make the right choice?

**STEP 4  
Sin Has Consequences  
(Gen. 3:14-19,23-24)**

Stress that besides characters, theme, and conflict, every story has a plot showing the struggles involved in solving the conflict so the theme can be accomplished. The intense struggles caused by sin are evident in the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin.

**Read Genesis 3:14-19,23-24.**

Guide learners to identify specific consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin. *(Giving and sustaining life now marked by struggle and pain. Blessing of work became hard work. Equal relationships became divisive. Alienation from one another, God, and the perfect environment*

**Sin Has Consequences**

KJV

Genesis 3:14-19,23-24

HCSB

14And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

.....

14 Then the LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life.

15 I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

16 He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children in anguish. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.

17 And He said to Adam, “Because you listened to your wife’s voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it’: The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.”

.....

KJV	HCSB
<p><sup>23</sup>Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.</p> <p><sup>24</sup>So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.</p>	<p><sup>23</sup> So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.</p>

The immediate effects of sin became readily apparent. The death process introduced by sin included alienation from God. Adam and Eve hid themselves from God (Gen. 3:8). When God confronted Adam, he blamed Eve, whom God gave him; when God confronted Eve, she blamed the serpent God made (vv. 9-13).

The Lord began His judgment of sin by confronting the **serpent** (v. 14). Known for his ability to talk, the **serpent** was consigned to a life of eating dust. Instead of moving around uprightly, the serpent was reduced to slithering around on his **belly**. The word **cursed** carries the opposite meaning of *blessed*. Just as *blessed* means “to be empowered,” *cursed* means “to be constrained” or “to be bound and rendered unable to succeed.”

Genesis 3:15 has been called the *protevangelium* or “first gospel,” the first promise in Scripture of the coming Redeemer. The verse predicts the clash between the seed of the woman, Jesus, and the serpent or Devil. The *protevangelium* also promised the serpent’s ultimate defeat. While the serpent would indeed bruise the heel of the woman’s seed, Jesus would bruise the serpent’s head, a fatal blow. Thus from the beginning of God’s Story, He had the end of the Story in view. Jesus would defeat the **serpent**, known also as the Devil or Satan (Rev. 20:2,10). When we succumb to the serpent’s temptations, we rebel against God. Yet, in spite of our rebellion, God reaches out to us to offer grace and restoration.

Significantly, the word *curse* does not occur in God’s comments to Eve in Genesis 3:16. Rather, God outlined for Eve what her life would entail. She would **anguish** in the **labor pains** of childbirth, have a strong **desire** for her husband, and experience his **rule over** her. In the patriarchal society of Moses’ day, which first inherited these written Scriptures, the husband’s headship of the home was the norm, yet men were expected to keep their families oriented toward God. The imperatives of Israel’s foundational dogma, the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4-9), are all masculine. However, history is replete with examples where husbands abused their God-

*God created.*) Consider how banishment from the garden reflected both God’s judgment and grace (see the **Bible commentary\*** [p. 24].

• **DISCUSS:** Of all the consequences Adam and Eve suffered for their rebellion, which do you think was the worst? Why?

Allow learners to share whether they feel it is fair or unfair for all humanity to reap the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin and why. Stress it is imperative to understand that every act of rebellion against God, even something we might consider insignificant, has far-reaching consequences.

**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**

(p. 12) Invite learners to respond in a general rather than personal way to the questions in Thursday’s “Learning and Living the Bible Lesson.”

• **SAY:** The man and woman had sinned. Where once there had been close fellowship with God, now there was a barrier. But God was not going to quit His Story just because humanity failed.

Stress that every good story provides hope the conflict will be solved in the end. Guide the class to identify the good news of hope in the midst of this bad news of sin’s consequences. Draw

attention to the ribbon on the poster and invite learners to give a name to the ribbon of hope running throughout God's Story. Declare God's Story included Jesus the Savior from the very beginning.

### PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

(pp. 21-22) Conclude this section by asking a volunteer to read the first **paragraph** in "Reflection." Declare every believer's consuming passion can be to respond to God's love with trusting obedience.

### Discussion Options: Life Impact Plus

- What answer can we give people when they ask us why life is so hard? What answer can we give people when they ask where they can find hope in this hard life?
- Do you think senior adults grow to be more or less sensitive to sin and its consequences? Explain your answer. Why should we take sin seriously in our later years and how can we show that we do?

## STEP 5 Conclusion

Although it is reasonable for learners to examine how they fit into God's Story, it is most essential to recognize God's Story is ultimately about God.

- **SAY:** We can strive to learn about God's character and agenda from each Bible story and seek to mold

given authority and power to lead the home, resorting instead to **rule over** it, mistreating their wives and children. Such was the negative impact of sin. Instead of the man and woman enjoying their status as equals, the woman's husband **will rule over** her. God did not prescribe this fate to Eve, but rather He described it to her as the certain result of her sinful act of disobedience. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God by disobeying Him, they became estranged from God and set against each other.

As for Adam, his days of working and watching the self-perpetuating garden of Eden were over. His life would be characterized by **painful labor**, the same word in Hebrew used for Eve's **labor pains** of childbirth in the previous verse. Instead of carefree harvesting, Adam faced **thorns and thistles** to get to his food. The good news for Adam and Eve was they could continue to live their lives; the bad news was their rebellion guaranteed hardship in every endeavor. Instead of enjoying his trouble-free work in Eden, Adam would have to **eat bread by the sweat of his brow**, a reference to the painstaking labors he was subjected to outside of Eden's bountiful garden. The same verse contains the grave reminder of humankind's mortality. Adam was taken from the **dust** (2:7) and would one day **return to dust**. Because of human rebellion and disobedience to God's commands, people have faced death ever since. In fact, the author of Hebrews declared all people were appointed to die (Heb. 9:27), and Paul stated death was the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23).

Adam exerted his first rule over Eve by taking the prerogative to name her (Gen. 3:20). God displayed His patience and grace by preparing the sinful couple suitable clothing (v. 21) and by assessing the situation whereby they still had access to the tree of life (v. 22). Since God's Story is not just about judging sin but also about wielding grace, **the LORD God sent him** and Eve away from the garden. From then on, Adam had to **work the ground from which he was taken**. **\*(See teaching plan, p. 23.)** This expulsion from the garden illustrated in one action God's judgment and grace. The judgment aspect arose in leaving behind a self-perpetuating garden to enter a hostile environment where growing food would prove difficult. The grace aspect arose in the same act of expulsion because the sinful couple was separated from the **tree of life**. Had they eaten from the **tree of life** in their corrupted state, they would have had to live forever that way. In God's Story, He provided a perfect solution to the sin problem. He sent His Son Jesus to live a sinless life, die an undeserved but substitutionary death, and then rise to life again. Jesus' cross became the new **tree of life** by which people's sins could be atoned and eternal life could be given. To ensure Adam and Eve would not eat from the tree of life and live forever in their fallen state, God **stationed the cherubim ... to guard the way to the tree of life**.

Adam and Eve’s sin had far-reaching consequences. All the ill-effects of their rebellion, fear, guilt, pain, grief, moral corruption, alienation from God and each other, suffering, and death, could only be answered by the power of one indestructible life, the life of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:16). During my 30-plus years in the ministry, I have had many people ask, “Why did this happen to me?” Sometimes they were responding to divorce, to the death of a child, or to the loss of a job. Many heart-wrenching tears have been shed over the bad news this sin-broken world has delivered into people’s lives. Only through personal faith in Jesus Christ can any of us gain assurance of conquest over the devastating consequences of our sins. We will have to live with these ill effects of sin for a while, but we are guaranteed victory in Jesus.

**God’s Story has barely begun yet we already see sin and its consequences. What does it say to you that such serious events occur so early in the Story?**

**Biblical Truths of This Lesson in Focus**

- God’s plan for all people to enjoy a special relationship with Him requires their acknowledgment of His unique status as Creator of all people and all things.
- As Creator, God seeks a meaningful relationship with all people, having created them in His image.
- People chose to rebel against God, marring His image in themselves, and alienating them from God.
- The special relationship God sought was ill-affected through human disobedience.

ourselves to that agenda rather than trying to mold God to our agendas.

Guide the class to determine what God revealed about Himself and His agenda from the beginning of His Story.

- **DISCUSS:** What is obviously our place in this story? What are the implications for our lives from the beginning of God’s Story? How might we approach our relationship with God differently if we really understood He created us specifically for that purpose? What would be our attitude toward sin if we really understood what sin does to relationships?

**PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**

(p. 22) Draw attention to “Applying the Word.” Give learners time to consider this privately or urge them to do so later today.

**DEPARTMENT PERIOD SUGGESTIONS**

**Welcome**—Greet participants. Introduce guests and new members.

**Suggested Music**—“Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine” (*The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, No. 334; 2008, No. 446)

**Suggested Scripture Reading**—Colossians 1:15-20

**Sharing**—Announce department or church activities. Introduce this new unit by asking if participants have played dot-to-dot puzzles with grandchildren. Explain that this 13-lesson unit will help participants connect dots between individual Bible stories and how they combine to tell one big story. **SAY:** We can only sing, “This is my story,” when we know God’s Story. Introduce today’s lesson. **ASK:** Why do we need to go back to the beginning of God’s Story when it’s most likely a story we know well? Today we will lay a foundation by examining why God wrote His Story and what sin has done to all our stories.

**Caring**—Invite learners to share prayer requests and ministry opportunities.

**Prayer**—Lead in prayer or enlist a volunteer to pray.