

7-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

VIDEO
ACCESS
INCLUDED



**COME
HOME**

Tracing God's Promise
of Home Through Scripture

CAROLINE SAUNDERS



CAROLINE SAUNDERS

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about the author

Caroline Saunders is a writer, Bible teacher, pastor's wife, and mother of three who believes in taking Jesus seriously and being un-serious about nearly everything else. She loves to serve at her church (it's not just the donuts), and every year, she retells the Bible's big story at a women's retreat that she and her friends offer local women through their parachurch ministry, Story & Soul. She's had the joy of publishing two Bible studies for teen girls (*Good News: How to Know the Gospel and Live It* and *Better Than Life: How to Study the Bible*

and Like It), two picture books for kids ages 4-8 (*The Story of Water* and *The Story of Home*), and two retellings of selected books of the Bible for elementary readers (*Sound the Alarm* and *Remarkable*). Find her writing, resources, and ridiculousness at WriterCaroline.com and on Instagram @writercaroline. (And finally, let it be known that Caroline's kids said, "Mom can make a joke out of anything," and so she ran and added that to her bio.)

dedication

To the women of Story & Soul (especially my teammates and sisters Christin and Megan):

I wonder if you know how you have been home to me when I felt like I had nowhere to go? How I have tearfully praised God to watch as each December, the faces looking back at me grow to look more like family? Seeking God's Word on your behalf has been one of the greatest joys of my life. Thank you for enjoying His story with me. May this serve you.

WELCOME

In fall 2019, I committed to studying the theme of “home” in Scripture the following year. Of course, 2020 was, in many ways, all about home: we were trapped in our homes, we were separated from those who felt like home to us, and we became increasingly aware that this home didn’t feel as safe as it once did. As disturbed as I was about the world, I marveled over all there was to uncover about home on the pages of the Bible. It starts with a perfect home and its tragic demise, contains story after story of people who aren’t home yet, and offers God’s promise to bring His children home. The more I studied, the more it became clear to me that “home” stretches far beyond a theological concept. It’s deeply personal.

I began to catch the scent of heavenly homesickness on every person I encountered. In his song, “Not My Home” songwriter Luke Bower expresses this longing by stating “There’s Eden in my bones.”

Our lives have different shapes, and yet the longing for home takes up space in our hearts in a way that’s both universal and seemingly impossible to describe. We all have our own ways to deal with this, like striving to make our current homes perfect or reaching back for old memories and happier times, hoping they hold the key to home.

But the Christ follower doesn’t have to look around or look back to find home—she gets to look ahead. I wrote this study to root you in the truest story, to show you the Way (Jesus), and to help you walk by faith. After all, God has promised to bring His children home, and God always keeps His promises.

Caroline

HOW

to use this study

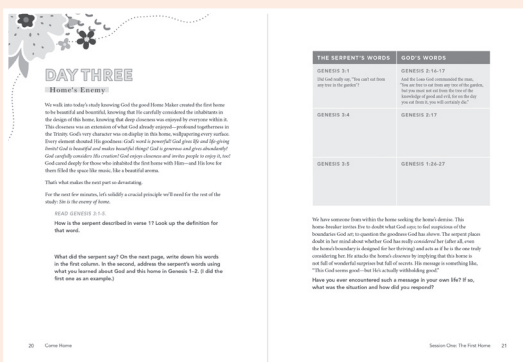
WELCOME!

We're so glad you've chosen to do this study! *Come Home* is a 7-session study in which Caroline Saunders follows the theme of home through the Bible. From humanity's first home to our eternal one, we'll see God drawing near to abide with us. We'll find that even the best aspects of home here are just a glimmer of what God is building for us through Christ. This study will affirm that our longing for home is good and purposeful, pointing us to our truest home which is found in Him.

GETTING STARTED

Because we believe discipleship happens best in community, we encourage you to do this study together in a group setting. Or, if you're doing this alone, consider enlisting a friend or two to go through it at the same time. This will give you study friends to pray with and connect with over coffee or through text or email so you can chat about what you're learning.

Here's a look at what you can expect to find in this study.



PERSONAL STUDY

Each week features five days of personal study to help you trace the theme of home through Scripture. You'll find questions to help you understand and apply the text, plus insightful commentary to clarify your study.

To access the video teaching sessions, use the instructions in the back of your Bible study book.

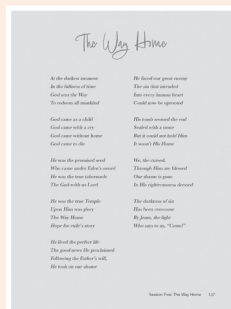




LETTERS

Day 5 of each week features a letter that expresses the writer's personal experience with home. The authors of these letters are women from different walks

of life. You'll have space to share how each letter resonated with you and helped you understand God's view of home.



POEMS

Caroline closes every video teaching with a poem that captures the heart of that message. We've included them in written form at the end of each session for you to reflect on.

VIEWER GUIDE

session two

Watch the session first video. Use this page to take notes, capture quotes or discuss what brought home the video teaching.

To access the video teaching session, see the resources in the back of your Bible study book.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. If you're doing this study with a group, be ready to discuss these questions during your time together. If you're studying a group, check out the reader guide or discuss your conclusions with your group members. If you're doing this study solo, use the following questions to reflect on what you've learned in the video teaching.

1. What does it mean to walk by faith? How did Abraham display it?
2. Would you say you are currently walking by faith? If not, why not? If so, what is the evidence?
3. Jacob had a life-changing encounter with God at Bethel. What is one "Bethel" moment you've had in your relationship with God? How did it impact you?
4. What does it mean that God was not just bringing Isaac home but was being brought home? How is it being this same for you?
5. Why is the journey home an important part of going home? What's your favorite part of this journey?
6. Like Jacob, do you ever find yourself fighting to receive your own blessing rather than trusting God to keep the promises? Explain.
7. If someone asked you what you learned in our time together today, what would you say?

Session Two Teaching a Household 37

VIEWER GUIDE

At the beginning of each session, you'll find a video viewer guide. These pages provide space for you to take notes during the video teaching and apply what you've heard. If you're studying with a group, these pages will drive your video teaching discussion. If you're doing this study solo, use this space as a reflection time.

LEADER GUIDE

discussion guide sample

Session One:

GOALS
Welcome women to the first session of Come Home. Provide name tags and distribute the study book, and explain the time available to discuss each session.

DISCUSS
Have as a first discussion topic, especially if you're leading a brand new group.

PREPARE TO TEACH
Share about the week's structure and the first day of personal study to complete in each week. Encourage women to take the first step. Offer an example of what all the days of the personal study, the same old but not the same. Offer an example of what all the days of the personal study, the same old but not the same. Offer an example of what all the days of the personal study, the same old but not the same.

PRAY
Close with prayer. Ask how the group was for praying for one another over the teaching week, and then do that too.

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LEADING A GROUP?

A free leader guide PDF is available for download at lifeway.com/comehome. The leader guide offers several tips and helps along with discussion guides for each week. At that website you'll also find free downloadable resources to help you promote the study in your church or neighborhood, including: an invitation card, promotional poster, bulletin insert, and PowerPoint® template.

the
first
home



session one

It was very good indeed.

GENESIS 1:31b

Home is a rich word, isn't it? It's hard to define, yet universally understood. We know when we miss it, we remember times we've experienced a measure of it, and we always find ourselves trying to get to it. Ingrained but elusive. Perhaps this is why we're so prone to look back—to try and grasp again what we once had. However, when we look at God's story of home in the Bible, it's clear that for the Christ follower, home is not behind. Home is ahead. We're all spiritually homesick, thinking we're longing for something we once had, while actually longing for something we've yet to have, something promised to God's people.

In this week's study, we're going to look at the first home. God made it, and it was wonderful. But this perfect home was lost, and homesickness pinched within the first human hearts. Yes, there's an enemy of home against which we all need to stand guard, but God promised to defeat this enemy and make the way home.

VIEWER GUIDE

session one

Watch the Session One video. Use this page to take notes, capture quotes, or doodle some thoughts from the video teaching session.



To access the video teaching sessions, use the instructions in the back of your Bible study book.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION QUESTIONS

If you're doing this study with a group, be ready to discuss these questions during your time together. (If you're leading a group, check out the leader guide at lifeway.com/comehome to help you prepare.) If you're doing this study solo, use the following questions to reflect on what you've heard in the video teaching.

- 1 What is one thing in the video teaching that stood out to you? Why?
- 2 How would you finish this statement "To me, home is . . . "?
- 3 What does the goodness and abundance of the first home teach us about God? Does that challenge your thoughts on God in any way? Explain.
- 4 In what areas of your life do you currently see God's goodness on display?
- 5 Generally speaking, how have you seen sin wreak havoc on homes around you?
- 6 How does Satan tempt you to doubt God? How does he tempt you to be suspicious of God's life-giving boundaries?
- 7 How do you see God speak and act redemptively in the closing part of this story? How does that give you hope in your struggles with sin?
- 8 If someone asked you what you learned in our time together today, what would you say?



DAY ONE

The Good Home Maker

No one makes a home like God.

LOOK UP PROVERBS 3:19 AND HEBREWS 11:3 and write both verses below.

How do these verses enhance your understanding of the creation narrative?

God built the first home with His word—with His wisdom! (Find a contractor who can do that.) The first home was spectacularly lovely and jam-packed with the fruit of God’s wisdom, crammed with evidence that God’s word is powerful.

DAY 1 OF CREATION INTRODUCES US TO A PATTERN: GOD SAYS, GOD SETS, GOD SHOWS.

- God **said**, “Let there be light,” and then, BOOM! there was light.
- He also **set** a life-giving boundary—sometimes the light would light (day), and sometimes the light would not (night).
- God **showed** His goodness. God called the light good, and of course it was.

Let's pay attention to Genesis 1:6-25, keeping an eye out for the *says, sets, shows* pattern. If you're comfortable writing in your Bible, you can label these things as you read the passage. (For example, you could underline the words God *said*, circle the boundary God *set*, and star the goodness God *showed*.)

Promise me you won't overthink this, okay? Feel at home in the pages of God's Word, and don't worry too much about mistakes.

If you're hesitant to scribble in your Bible or simply like to fill out a worksheet, you are also free to record what you notice on these pages. As you read, you may want to place a question mark by anything that confuses you.

Maybe a future study day will answer your question, or perhaps you can discuss it with your group when you meet.

I'm telling you, do not overthink this. That mean teacher from high school will not be grading your work.

DAY 2: GENESIS 1:6-8

What did God say?

What boundary did God set?

How did God show His goodness?

DAY 3: GENESIS 1:9-13

What did God say?

What boundary did God set?

How did God show His goodness?

DAY 4: GENESIS 1:14-19

Note: Here God set up the rhythms that form our lives—seasons, days, and years. Notice that He made it so much more than a calendar. He made it beautiful! How many of us have tried to take a picture of a sunset or a starry sky and discovered no camera could truly capture it?

What did God say?

What boundary did God set?

How did God show His goodness?

DAY 5: GENESIS 1:20-23

What did God *say*?

What boundary did God *set*?

How did God *show* His goodness?

DAY 6, BEFORE MAN: GENESIS 1:24-25

What did God *say*?

What boundary did God *set*?

How did God *show* His goodness?

When you've finished paying attention to Genesis 1:6-25, check this box .
(*There's no reason for this except that we just love a box-checking moment.*)

As you noted, this *says, sets, shows* pattern holds from days two through six of creation. Sometimes God shows His goodness in an obvious way ("God saw that it was good" is a common refrain), and sometimes the goodness is implied by the beauty and bounty of His creation. This is a really wonderful thing to consider about God: He didn't have to make things wonderful, but He did!

How does this description of God compare with your current view of Him?

Confession: I'm prone to think of God as a grumpy, cross-armed principal with a weird mustache, bad suit, coffee breath, and clipboard where He records my many indiscretions. He might say, "Late again, I see," or "Well, I'll forgive you, but I'm not happy about it" or rattle off a bunch of rules designed to squash any semblance of fun. The creation narrative (and probably every other part of the Bible) blows my wrong view of God to smithereens. As we read about our Creator God shaping this beautiful, bountiful home, it's clear His word is powerful, His boundaries are life-giving, and His goodness is evidenced everywhere. God is not a cross-armed authoritarian whose office we want to avoid or slink away from, but an open-armed Home Maker whose home we want to run to!

Let's reflect.

This narrative is full of life! God offers life-giving words, God offers life-giving boundaries, and God gives His creation the ability to create more life. How does this shape how you view God?

1. What does this creation narrative reveal about God's words?
2. How can the creation narrative inform how you view God's boundaries?
3. How does the creation narrative strengthen you to remember God's goodness?
4. Think about the pattern: the words God says, the boundaries God sets, and the goodness God shows. How might these elements impact how you understand home? How you understand God?
5. Is there any part of today's text that you'd like to talk over with another believer? Write his or her name below, and make a plan to reach out to that person this week.

Too often, we're tempted to be like Eve and think God is holding out on us (Gen. 3:1-7). But the Eden narrative resets our wonky inner compass. God is not just good—He's the author of good! God not only gives us our lives—He makes our lives lively! The first home equips us to wipe the smudge off our glasses and view the whole concept of home through a clearer lens. Truly, we can trust God's promises of home—because the whole notion of home has its origin in Him alone.



DAY TWO

The Together Home

We've all been in beautiful, bountiful homes—homes that look great and have great stuff—yet don't seem homey. We get the feeling that such homes aren't for living and that such homes don't have us in mind. We're too prone to spill stuff. We'll push the wrong button on the remotes and accidentally destroy the carefully designed settings of technology we don't understand. We are too human for such homes.

But here's wonderful news: God made the first home *with humanity in mind!* Consideration and closeness are woven into the fabric of the creation story. God made a home where humans could be with Him, and it was every bit as wonderful as you can imagine.

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES. How does each one help you understand God's purpose for creation?

Psalm 115:16

Isaiah 45:18

This narrative is about to go “grape juice on the white carpet,” but before it does, let's once again soak in the goodness of this first home.

REVIEW GENESIS 1 AND READ GENESIS 2 with two specific themes (repeated ideas) in mind: consideration and closeness.

- **God's consideration for humanity—How does the text reveal God's hospitality? In other words, how can you tell that God thoughtfully shaped this home in anticipation of those who would share it with Him?**
- **The closeness that was enjoyed in this home—What details point to togetherness?**

NOW, LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES FROM THOSE CHAPTERS and note how each one reveals one of those themes.

Genesis 2:8-9

Genesis 2:16-17

Genesis 2:18

Genesis 2:23

Genesis 2:25

God created this home not just for Himself and not just for humanity. God created this home for humanity to be *with* Him. (Pause for effect. This truth really ministers to me.)

Think about what you already know about God and the Bible (whether it's a lot or a little). What evidence is found in Scripture of God's desire to be *with* people?

One thing we need to be clear about: before this first home, God wasn't sitting around, twiddling His holy thumbs and wishing He had someone to hang out with. Remember this truth about the Trinity: God is one, and yet God is three. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are one, yet because God is three persons, God enjoys perfect closeness and community. Like we talked about in this session's teaching time, the first home is not the *invention* of togetherness but the *extension* of it. The inhabitants of the first home were invited to experience what God Himself already enjoys: togetherness.

What images, memories, or ideas come to your mind when you hear the word *togetherness*?

Based on your life experiences, why does togetherness matter?

Based on the creation narrative, why does togetherness matter?

Here's something interesting from behind the scenes of the formation of this Bible study: as we brainstormed the title, we realized it is impossible to find an appropriate synonym for the word "home." If you go hunting for synonyms, you'll find a bunch of words that fall short, like "dwelling," "abode," "house," "apartment." After every single one was mentioned, we said, "Ew, no, that's not it!" None of those words work. They're just place words, structure words—and there's something in us that innately understands that home isn't simply a place or a structure. Home is people, too. And really, home isn't merely people—it's about the closeness people share and the consideration they have for one another. Even when we live alone, we understand the treasure of inviting others over for dinner or experiencing the hospitality of others! Home is a togetherness word, and something like "dwelling" falls terribly short.

How would you define "home"? *(If you find it hard to define, consider listing some home moments you've experienced. That'll cut to the heart of the meaning better than a dictionary-like definition.)*

Jean Val Jean didn't sing, "Bring him to the dwelling" in *Les Miserables* (and if he did, none of us would snot-cry the way we do when he sings "Bring Him Home"). Michael Buble's 2005 song "Home" wouldn't have worked with the word "abode," and John Denver couldn't have crooned, "Take me to my lodging, country roads." Without the word *home*, these emotion-packed lyrics suddenly sound like they were written by robots.

I think the reason these supposed synonyms won't work in place of *home* is because they all lack the idea of togetherness. Home is supposed to be a together place; it always has been. It was that way from the beginning by God's design. Our longing to be considered in our homes, our longing to be close to God and others in our homes—it all makes sense, doesn't it?

LOOK UP GENESIS 3:8 and write it below.

This verse occurs after sin entered the picture, but it also gives us a glimpse of what garden of Eden togetherness might've been like. God was walking in the cool of the day; the man and woman heard Him.

That day, Adam and Eve hid. But it's clear that hadn't always been the case. The Hebrew word for God's action in this verse indicates this was a habitual practice.¹ How many moments of *not hiding* did Adam and Eve enjoy before sin intruded their hearts, unpacking its suitcase of shame and separation? We can't know. Even still, in our hearts, we long for this garden togetherness.

Has this part of God's story of home stirred up any longings in your heart? Tell me about it. (Pssst. It's okay if the answer is no.)

Is there any part of today's text that you'd like to talk over with another believer? If so, write his or her name below, and think about reaching out to that person.



DAY THREE

Home's Enemy

We walk into today's study knowing God the good Home Maker created the first home to be beautiful and bountiful, knowing that He carefully considered the inhabitants in the design of this home, knowing that deep closeness was enjoyed by everyone within it. This closeness was an extension of what God already enjoyed—profound togetherness in the Trinity. God's very character was on display in this home, wallpapering every surface. Every element shouted His goodness: *God's word is powerful! God gives life and life-giving limits! God is beautiful and makes beautiful things! God is generous and gives abundantly! God carefully considers His creation! God enjoys closeness and invites people to enjoy it, too!* God cared deeply for those who inhabited the first home with Him—and His love for them filled the space like music, like a beautiful aroma.

That's what makes the next part so devastating.

For the next few minutes, let's solidify a crucial principle we'll need for the rest of the study: *Sin is the enemy of home.*

READ GENESIS 3:1-5.

How is the serpent described in verse 1? Look up the definition for that word.

What did the serpent say? On the next page, write down his words in the first column. In the second, address the serpent's words using what you learned about God and this home in Genesis 1–2. (I did the first one as an example.)

THE SERPENT'S WORDS	GOD'S WORDS
<p>GENESIS 3:1</p> <p>Did God really say, "You can't eat from any tree in the garden"?</p>	<p>GENESIS 2:16-17</p> <p>And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 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>GENESIS 3:4</p>	<p>GENESIS 2:17</p>
<p>GENESIS 3:5</p>	<p>GENESIS 1:26-27</p>

We have someone from within the home seeking the home's demise. This home-breaker invites Eve to doubt what God *says*; to feel suspicious of the boundaries God *set*; to question the goodness God has *shown*. The serpent places doubt in her mind about whether God has really *considered* her (after all, even the home's boundary is designed for her thriving) and acts as if he is the one truly considering her. He attacks the home's *closeness* by implying that this home is not full of wonderful surprises but full of secrets. His message is something like, "This God seems good—but He's actually withholding good."

Have you ever encountered such a message in your own life? If so, what was the situation and how did you respond?

God’s word plays a powerful role in the formation of the first home. What role does *disbelieving* God’s word play in the corruption of the first home?

This serpent is a bold dude. Imagine speaking deceptively about God in His house! Imagine questioning the words of the One who created all things with His words! The serpent has come to undermine the home’s very foundation.

LET’S LOOK AT GENESIS 3:6-13.

In verse 6, Eve admires three qualities about the fruit. *LOOK UP GENESIS 2:9*. How does this verse affirm that the first two qualities Eve admires are actually true?

The third quality—the tree’s ability to make one wise—is beyond its scope. According to Proverbs 9:10, what’s the actual source of wisdom?

Proverbs 3:19 says, “The LORD founded the earth by wisdom.” Mankind was literally surrounded by the fruit of God’s wisdom—yet they looked to a forbidden tree for wisdom rather than to the God who made it.

Nancy Guthrie says that here, at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “Adam was meant to judge good as good and evil as evil according to what God had said. It was there that Adam should have crushed the head of the serpent when he tempted Eve to eat of this tree. But he didn’t.”²

Adam and Eve were told their eyes would be uncovered (Gen. 3:5), but they didn’t understand that this uncovering would be violating. It wasn’t the soft glow of a lamp but the searing brightness of a spotlight. In trying to see like God, they ironically blinded themselves, and a veil descended upon human hearts that would not lift until Calvary. (*Aren’t you excited to experience the unfolding of this story?*)

**What do Adam and Eve do in verse 7 to address their shame?
Do you think this actually helped?**

**Have you ever responded to your sin and shame in a similar fashion?
Explain.**

In Genesis 2:25, man and woman were described as “naked, yet felt no shame,” but now, after sin, they frantically sought to cover themselves. Even though we’ve always lived in a sinful world, this instinct isn’t difficult for us to understand. I mean, being naked in your own home or in front of a trusted spouse isn’t really a big deal and is even an indication of comfort or intimacy. But being naked in a place that is not home or in front of a stranger? Well, that’s the stuff of nightmares. (We have all had this very nightmare.) Clearly, home had shifted. Everything had shifted.

Where in Genesis 3:6-13 do you see the following results of sin?

Shame

Exposure

Hiding

Blame

Sin makes big promises of life, but it only brings death. Adam and Eve’s physical home wasn’t destroyed, yet everything that made home feel like home was destroyed through sin’s deception. Adam and Eve’s physical bodies didn’t immediately drop dead, but the process of death had begun. Plus, spiritual death took place with their separation from God. Their relationship was broken. And their sin caused the venom of sin to begin to seep into the world’s veins.

They hungered for glory, but they found shame. They had been living in a home where they were considered and seen, but now they’d been tricked and exposed. They wanted to be outside of God’s design, so they took the step to do so, thinking it would be life—only to realize it was death.

The creation narrative reminds us that home is God's design and anything outside of God's design is sin. It also warns us: If we are to be people who cling to God's promises of home, we have to clearly understand that sin is the enemy of home.

Let me restate something from the teaching video that's foundational for our understanding of God's story of home. Throughout this study, you'll hear me say that sin is the *enemy of home*. It is. Pride, jealousy, selfishness, rage, immorality, and other sin rips at the fabric of our earthly homes. But know that behind sin is an *enemy of God*: the serpent (also known as Satan, the devil, the deceiver, the accuser, etc.). He was the one who introduced sin into the first home, and he still works to tempt us to sin. We must be on guard against sin, always ready to recognize it as an enemy, as something that will bring death.

Adam and Eve are often called "our first parents," and we've inherited a lot from them. Like them, our hearts are desperate to be like God in ways He did not design. Our ears, too, are attuned to Satan's lies and numbed to God's truth. Though many of our personal stories of home are punctuated with glimmers of Eden found in Genesis 1–2, all of our stories are shadowed with the darkness of Genesis 3. Our personal sin, the sin of others, and the generational impact of sin intrude upon our places, our people, and our peace. Because sin has been reigning since the days of Adam and Eve, all of us endure homes that are broken on some level. All of us are homesick.

How has the enemy of sin affected your story of home?

Take heart, sister: Sin is a true enemy, and yet, in the story of the Bible and in our own stories, sin does not have the final word. Tomorrow we'll look into how God addresses this enemy.



DAY FOUR

Home Lost

Sin is the enemy of home, but here is some good news: God will always, always deal with this enemy. God is not just a Home Maker; He is a Home Defender.

How did God deal with this first sin? He punished it through a series of curses—first the serpent, then the woman, then the man.

THE SERPENT – GENESIS 3:14-15

Notice that the curse to the serpent contains a promise for humanity.

Write verse 15 below and highlight it in your Bible.

This is God's first promise of home! One day, the offspring of a woman would strike the sin-promoting serpent's (Satan) head—dealing him an eternally deadly blow and eliminating sin's power. But this defeat of the enemy would be costly, because the offspring of woman, Jesus, would be struck, too. But through Jesus's death and subsequent resurrection, God would provide humanity a grace-lined path home.

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN – GENESIS 3:16-19

Next up came curses for Eve and then Adam. Notice that the curses are simultaneously an act of judgment and a pronouncement of natural consequence. Adam and Eve wanted to step outside of God's design to reach for their own blessing, and it's as if God said, "Okay. But here's what it looks like outside of my design."

To better understand the devastation of life outside of God’s design, look at the summary statements of humanity’s consequences. Next to each statement, record a “memory” or two from Genesis 1–2 that demonstrates how God’s design has now been tainted. I did the first one for you as an example.

SUMMARY STATEMENT	MEMORY FROM GENESIS 1-2
Pain while bringing forth (and bringing up) children	Growing a family was framed up with only blessing in Genesis 1:28: “God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth . . .”
Division and oppression in relationships	(Gen. 2:22-25)
Land that fights against human efforts	(Gen. 1:11-12)
Work that is frustrating, burdensome, and unfulfilling	(Gen. 2:15)

How do you relate to these aspects of the curse?

LET'S LOOK AT GENESIS 3:20-24.

As Genesis 3 comes to a close with such deadly consequence, God gives Adam and Eve three blessings to prepare them for living in a sin-laden world: a hope for life, a covering for life, and a life-giving boundary.

1. A hope for life – Genesis 3:20

We've been calling Eve "Eve" this whole time, but up until this point, Scripture has just called her "woman" or "wife." Also, we've been calling Adam "Adam," but Scripture has been saying "man." The Hebrew word for *man* is "adam," and that's why we (and Bible translators) call the man "Adam."³ (I mean, who knows. Maybe he preferred going by the name Cornelius.) But a beautiful thing happens at this point in the narrative. Adam, who has been entrusted with naming all the animals (see 2:20), names his wife.

Why does Adam name her "Eve"?

How was this probably an honoring experience for Eve?

In their most recent interaction, Adam spoke about Eve with blame. But Eve's name reminds us a bit of their pre-sin interaction when Adam spoke about her using poetry.

Why could we say this was an act of faith in God's promise in Genesis 3:15?

Adam and Eve were in this situation because they doubted God's word. But here, Adam seems to intentionally associate Eve with God's promise to send a snake-crushing son through woman.

2. A covering for life – Genesis 3:21

Consider for a moment the difference between Adam and Eve and God. God created the world with just His word, while Adam and Eve can barely make clothes for themselves, even when they borrow leaves God made. They are in need of a covering, and they can't make it themselves.

How is God's covering for Adam and Eve better than the coverings they made for themselves in verse 7?

How would God have provided these coverings? (Hint: Look back at Gen. 2:19-20.) How do you imagine this experience impacted Adam and Eve?

What do God's actions say about the seriousness of sin and what it truly takes to cover shame? What event is foreshadowed by this action?

What does it say about God that He clothed them rather than sending them away in shame?

Leaves are terrible clothes. (If you don't believe me, go try to make a dress using the foliage of your nearest tree.) They will turn brown, break down, and Adam and Eve would be back to naked pretty quickly. But how were they supposed to know that? They'd never needed clothes before. God, who had always provided for them, provided yet again, using something more substantial: the skins of animals. If you remember, Adam named all the

animals! He was familiar with each and every one. But there was only one way for Adam and Eve to get clothing that would last and truly cover them. Before this moment, nothing had ever died. God was laying the groundwork for them to associate sin with death. Perhaps every time Adam and Eve got dressed, they pondered this. God's story teaches us that for sinners to be truly covered, death must occur.

3. A life-giving boundary – Genesis 3:22-24

In rejecting the design for this first home (and thus the Designer), Adam and Eve would now have what they thought they wanted: an opportunity to “be like God.” They must make their own home.

Adam and Eve's forced exit from Eden can feel cruel, but whenever we are confused by God's Word or our circumstances, we must remember God's character.

What do you know to be true about Him from our study so far?

According to verse 22, why was their leaving an act of protection?

This first family stepped into a world tainted by sin, and our families endure this, too. If Adam and Eve looked back at the garden on their way out, it was clear that the way to the tree of life and to home with God would require someone coming under a sword. Who could do this?

Take heart, dear sister. God will keep His promise. The Eden promise is *the enemy of home will be destroyed*. God will make the way home, and He will conquer this evil serpent and the enemy of sin.

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES TO SEE WHAT IS AHEAD.

Isaiah 25:6-8

Revelation 12:9



DAY FIVE

Where Are You?

After Adam and Eve sinned and hid, God asked them, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9) Counselor and writer K. J. Ramsey suggests in her book *This Too Shall Last* that this is perhaps an ongoing question He asks.⁴ It’s not that God didn’t know where Adam and Eve were—or where we are—but the question is an invitation for us to notice where we are.

Have we gone into hiding over the shame of our sin? Our shame testifies: *I am not where I ought to be*. We feel naked and disgraced, unable to cover ourselves adequately. Maybe we reach for good deeds, perfectionism, distraction, or denial, but at the end of the day, it’s all fig leaves. Such things cannot truly cover us. But God’s invitation to us is “Come home.” He alone can cover us because He alone has truly conquered the shame of sin through Jesus!

Are we longing for what only God can offer? The pangs of spiritual homesickness are like alerts from our soul’s GPS: *I am not where I long to be*. That’s why God’s invitation is such a welcoming one: “Come home.” He alone can bring us home.

On the final study day of each week, I’ll share with you a letter from a fellow sister in Christ. As she shares her story of home, I hope it will help you better understand God’s story of home, help reveal where you are, and assist you in finding your way home to Him.



Dear Sister,

Home and the feeling of homesickness has always been kind of a theme in my life, and the feeling of not really belonging anywhere. I'm adopted from China, so that's probably where part of it comes from. I don't know for what reasons my biological parents gave me away, and why I ended up in the orphanage. I don't feel Chinese since I'm raised with Western values. But I also don't feel Dutch since I don't look the same as my Dutch family.

God blessed me by giving me the two loveliest parents. They raised me with their whole hearts and all the love they have. They also raised me in faith, letting me know that I have a heavenly Father who watches over me and holds me in His hand and that I belong in His kingdom, as His daughter. He knows where I come from and for what reasons my life came to be, and He has been there with me all the time. I belong with Him as His daughter! :)

Like Psalm 139:13-14 (KJV) beautifully says: "For Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are Thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well."

Even though (if all is well) there are many things and people to love on earth, it's nothing close to how much God loves us and wants us with Him! That thought gives me so much strength and peace! We are wandering the earth but our home—our true home where we belong—is with Him.

God is great!

— JADE VAN DER ZALM, *illustrator, the Netherlands*

Jade illustrated my children's book, The Story of Home!

Use the space below (or your own journal) to respond to this letter.
You may want to use the following questions to guide your response.

What thoughts and feelings are you experiencing as you consider this sister's story?

What from her letter most resonates with you and why?

How does her story help you understand God's story of home, reveal where you are, or help you find your way home to Him?

The First Home

*In the beginning,
God used His word
To turn a bunch of nothing
Into land, sea, beasts, birds*

*Man was created by God
And was created for home
Look how God provided
Look how man was known*

*He made us to bear His image
To point the world to Him
At first this purpose seemed plenty
Until the deceiver stepped in*

*“Did God really say?”
The serpent questioned the Word
It made us start to wonder
Did we really hear what we heard?*

*Sin promised to give
But really it was a crook
It intruded our home
And took, and took, and took*

*God punished but promised
A Seed would be sown
To provide our salvation
To make our way home*