



CONNECT BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

- If you haven't the last few weeks, take a few moments to check in with how your group is doing! Whether that's highs and lows from the week, or just a basic "how are you showing up?", take a moment and check in.
- Did you notice anything you thought was interesting as you were reading the Bible last week?
- Are you generally a big reader, or not so much? Do you generally enjoy reading your Bible?
- Take a minute watch and discuss this Bible Project video on "design patterns." If your group hasn't heard of the idea before, it's a really good introduction to how biblical authors write! <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/design-patterns-biblical-narrative/>.

PRACTICE LEARN TO SEE AND SHARE THE BEAUTY OF SCRIPTURE

The idea of "design patterns" might sound geeky, but it's actually central to how the Bible wants to be read. These repeating images and stories – whether the "see-want-take" story of temptation, the "rescue through the waters" story of salvation, or a hundred others – are meant to change and transform us.

These patterns are meant to give us lenses through which to understand our own lives and the world around us. The reason the "see-want-take" story repeats again and again is because the author thinks it repeats again and again in our own lives! Apart from Christ, we are all always retelling the story of Adam and Eve. We will understand God, ourselves, and the world around us better when we let Scripture teach us – teach us to see these patterns not only in the Biblical stories, but in the stories of our own lives and the lives of those we love.

Scripture is one of the ways God is shaping us to see the world the way that he sees it. God's plan for us is more than obedience (although it's certainly not less than that!). God's plan is for us to be *mature*, full grown kingly sons and queenly daughters. That means more than simply taking directions; it means learning to see, feel, and act the way our Father does. That's what these patterns are meant to do.

Take a moment as a group to read and discuss the story of Adam and Eve through this lens. Read Genesis 3 together as a group—if anyone in the group is unfamiliar with the story up until this point, take a moment and summarize the story so far. As you read the passage, do so remembering that these things happened this way for our instruction! Encourage each person to ask themselves as you read: "How does this map onto my own life? Where have I seen this pattern before?" Every element of the story is fair game, and you'll probably be surprised by your group's insight; but if you need some example questions to ask yourself to get you started, we've included some below.

SOME IDEAS . . . QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

–If you want to see how the Bible itself plays with this story, you can read Genesis 16:1-6. Notice the similarities! Abram *listens to the voice* of Sarai, rather than of God; Sarai *takes* Hagar and *gives* her to Abram, like Eve with the fruit; and the story ends with a curse (Sarai to Abram) and an exile (Hagar from Abram’s household). How has your life, like Abram’s, reflected the story of Adam and Eve?

–What voices other than God’s do we listen to? What do they teach us to desire?

–In what ways does sin leave us “naked”?

–What fig leaves do we use to hide from others?

–In what ways do we hide from God?

–Why might it matter that Adam and Eve hide behind the trees God has planted for them? Does that map to anything in our own lives?

–Have you ever been cursed? Have you ever been blessed? Blessings and curses don’t have to be magical—they can be as simple as the painful legacy of a parent or the encouraging voice of God in prayer.

–In what ways have you seen sin hurt not only the sinner, but also the people around them? Adam sins and the earth is cursed because of him; can you think of parallels in your own experience?

–What other details in the story resonate with you?

Paul tells us that Scripture is meant to “make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). It is not the case that our lives have to replay the story of Adam and Eve! We can listen to the voice of God, as they failed to do. If we do so, our eyes will be opened—not to our nakedness, but to our destiny as kings and queens.

Our prayer for you, this week and every week, is that you will hear God’s voice in these scriptures. As you read, watch for other patterns. Patterns for warning, like the repeated turning of brother against brother; patterns for endurance, like the suffering of God’s servants; patterns for hope, like the eventual triumph of God’s people. Those patterns aren’t just literary! They’re meant to sharpen your eyes to those patterns in your own life.

Ask God to teach you to see these patterns in the story of your own walk with him. Pray with us that God will teach you to see as he sees. As you pray for one another, include in your prayers the request that God teach each of you this week to be more like him.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible and prayed consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?
- How did you become more like Jesus this week?