



FOUNDATIONS FOR FLOURISHING

DISCUSSION GUIDE

May 27-28, 2023

Foundations For Flourishing - Week 2 “A Transformed Mind”

GATHER

- What is something you wish you could experience again for the *first* time? (For example: a book or movie where you don't know how it ends, etc.)
 - As this weekend focused on Scripture, you could also talk about your personal experience with the Bible! Some ideas: What are your first memories of the Bible? Who introduced you to it? What are some of your favourite and/or impactful memories of encountering parts of Scripture for the first time?
- If you were at a weekend service, share your takeaways from the message you heard. What was something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?

GROW

This weekend's message was launched out of Genesis 3:1-6 and interacted with some other key texts (see below). Talk through the topic more thoroughly as a group using the outline below.

Feel free to select a suggested question or two in each section to guide your conversation.

- ***Understand Their Story***

The Christian worldview holds that the spiritual realm is real and that our “enemy”, Satan, has destructive tactics that interact with God's words. Read Genesis 3:1-6 to discuss this further.

- Compare the serpent's first words here with God's words in Genesis 2:16. What do the serpent's first words do with God's words?

It's a suggestion that creates confusion about what God says. He twists God's words with the phrase “did God actually say...” (v.1)

*At first the deception is subtle. It's not a full on attack against what God has actually said. Sometimes we are vulnerable because we don't discern what is *almost true* from what is *actually true*.*

- Compare the serpent's second set of words here with God's words in Genesis 2:17. What does the serpent's second set of words do?

It's a lie that creates contradiction with what God says. He denies God's claim about what will happen with the phrase “you will not surely die...” (v.4).

Additionally, there's an appealing promise: “you'll be like God”. Sometimes we are vulnerable because we buy into the idea that we can find something good apart from God.

Or, the temptation is appealing because there's a half-truth in it ("your eyes will be opened"). One commentary insightfully describes it this way: "So the tempter pits his bare assertion against the word and works of God, presenting divine love as envy, service as servility, and a suicidal plunge as a leap into life, 'All these things will I give thee ...'; the pattern repeats in Christ's temptations, and in ours."¹

- What do the serpent's tactics tell us about what humanity should do with God's words? What could Adam and Eve have done differently?

Satan targets God's word from the start. This ought to tell us that God's word must be critical to our flourishing. They didn't properly know/remember what God had said. Notice, Eve "over-corrects" and adds to God's original command by saying they couldn't "touch" the tree (v.3). They didn't believe what God had said - they perceived that the tree was to be desired to make one wise (v.6). They didn't obey what God had said - they ate (v.6).

- In what ways do you relate to Adam and Eve? Are there things about the Bible that confuse or concern you?

- **Connect To His Story**

- We're aiming to see the importance of God's communication with humanity this week. Compare the lessons from Genesis 3:1-6 with observations from the texts below.

- Take a look at the parallels of the Genesis story with Luke 4:1-13. Do you see any similarities between what Satan does to Eve and what he does to Jesus?

Notice how Satan creates confusion/casts doubt about what God said in 4:3 and 4:9 ("if you are the Son of God" - God had already clarified this in Luke 3:22); tells Jesus to do something that contradicts what God says (see 4:7 and Jesus' response in 4:8). Again, he tries to tempt by twisting what God says (see 4:10-11 and Jesus' response in 4:12).

- Look up 2 Peter 1:16-21.

- What experience from Peter's life does he describe? (v.16-18)

He points back to his experience of being physically with Jesus at key points in Jesus' earthly ministry. One of which was a vivid and profound experience shared with only 3 others (see Matthew 17:1-13)! He heard God's voice audibly (v.18)!

- In light of that experience, what does he say about Scripture? How does that encourage those he's writing to who didn't have the same experience? (v.19-21)
We might wish that we'd hear God's voice audibly, or have a miraculous personal experience to strengthen our faith. These are good desires, but they shouldn't be held at the neglect of the treasure that we have: The Bible! Peter says it's something "more fully confirmed" (v.19 - ESV), or "completely reliable" (v.19 - NIV). We do well to pay attention to it (v.19) because it finds its origin in God himself (v.21)! These words are from God himself. Ponder that! Be encouraged by what you hold in your hands and have access to!

- These verses reinforce the reality that God speaks. What does God's posture of communication to us tell us about him and what he wants for us? Why does this matter?

Consider how this highlights the care of God to be known by his creation! He desires a relationship with us. He wants us to know the right way to live and flourish! If he was a distant or disinterested or impersonal being/force we'd never have any communication from him to us.

¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 73.

GO

- **Apply To Our Story**

We all want to flourish and prosper. Building our lives on God and his word is the best way to get there.

Feel free to select a section or two to use in your group time.

- The Psalms often highlight the importance of the word of God. For example, read Psalm 1 to set you up to answer the next 2 questions about reading the Bible.
 - What posture ought we to have towards the law of the LORD?
Delight in it, meditate on it day and night (v.2)!
 - What does this Psalm indicate happens when we take this posture?
Referred to as “blessed” (v.1), we yield fruit in its season like a tree (v.3), like a tree, our lead does not wither (v.3), we prosper in all we do (v.3), we don’t share in the activities and consequences of the wicked (v.1, v. 4, v.5-6).
- “Read the Bible daily” might sound simple, but many find it difficult (or not a priority).
 - What makes it challenging to regularly spend time reading the Bible?
 - What is working for you? Share your practices, successes, tips!
(See the above section about Psalm 1 if you need biblical vision for this!)
- Northview’s statement of faith articulates our core beliefs - one of which is about “The Revelation of God”. This might be helpful to consult as you think through these next questions.
<https://northview.org/statement-of-faith/>
 - Is there anything you are noticing *in the church* that seems to be moving away or calling this into question? Conversations with people? Social media posts from Christian influences? Trends? Etc. *Another way to ask this: Where does it seem like the Genesis 3 question (“did God really say?”) is causing doubt or confusion?*
 - What are the common objections you’ve encountered when it comes to believing in the authority or credibility of the Bible? Have you found anything helpful in responding to such objections?

Pray!

- Romans 12:1-2 calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Psalm 119:105 describes God’s word as a “lamp for our feet” and a “light for our path”. In what ways could these be a prompt for prayer today? Where do you need guidance and transformation of your mind?
- All of our activity is unto God’s glory our mission is to help every person become a “deeply rooted follower of Jesus”. *We put this in every Community Group guide because we believe it’s important: Who are those who don’t currently follow Jesus - or are wrestling with the subjects we’ve looked at this week - that you could pray for by name?*