

Discussion Guide

Section # 5: THERE IS STILL HOPE

Read to the Group: Adam and Eve made themselves a covering of fig leaves in order to make themselves presentable to God, but God refused to accept that clothing.

Group Questions:

1. What material did God choose to make clothes for them instead of fig leaves?
2. Why do you think God decided to use skins for clothes, which meant that He had to kill an animal?

Read to the Group: We might think that the reason God did not approve of the fig leaves was because the leaves were not much of a covering. Leaves offer no weather protection and certainly are not long-lasting! But the real reason is that God wanted to show them the picture of a sacrifice. The idea that an innocent life would have to pay to cover their sins must have been a hard concept. Even today many people think that they must do good deeds to cover their sins. The concept that someone else, someone innocent, would die for us to cover our sins is sometimes hard to comprehend.

In the early part of the Bible, the Old Testament section, God outlined what He expected of the people. He knew people needed clear pictures of His justice, mercy and grace.

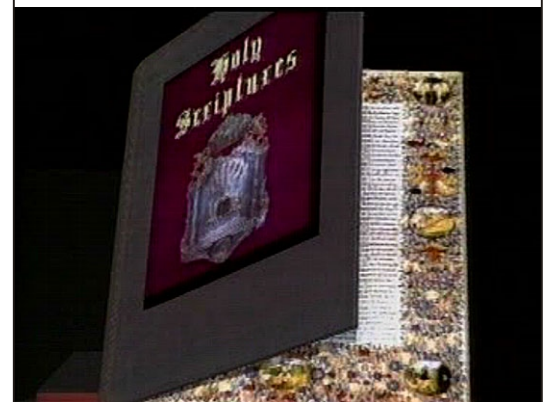
God is the one who chose to make Adam and Eve clothing out of animal skins. He killed the animals, took off the skins, made the clothes, and even put the skins on Adam and Eve. He did this to show that mankind cannot do anything to make itself acceptable to God. God would have to provide the acceptable covering. This covering had to include the spilling of innocent blood. Although, the blood of animals could never cover our sin, it serves as a picture of the punishment and remedy for all sin.

God already knew before He created the world that there would need to be a Deliverer. As we will see later in this video, the Bible explains how Jesus was destined to become the ultimate sacrifice for our sin.



Show the Following Segment from the *God's Story* video:

“The Fig Leaves which Adam and Eve” (Picture of hands on fig tree leaves)... through... “In God's Story there is still hope” (Closing of the Bible). 1 minute, 18 seconds



Remember the page that represented our life? (Hold up a page covered with black mark and keep adding more black marks as you speak) These black marks represented our sins and as we continue to sin our lives just get darker and darker. Do you also remember the Bible verse that said “The wages of sin is death”? Well the good news is that the rest of that verse goes on to say, “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

(Hold up a second sheet, a clean piece of white paper.) Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sin. If we trust Him to save us, He covers our sin (cover the marked paper with the white one): His perfect life, His righteousness, allows us to restore our relationship with God.

At the end of this last segment of the video, Adam and Eve were devastated because of their sin and loss. They could have lived in the garden forever, but because of this separation they must also face physical death. When a branch is broken off of a tree, very soon it will wither and die.

God sustains life. When Adam's relationship with God was broken, so was his source of life. Therefore he must die physically. In addition, he must face the hardships of life outside of the ideal existence God had offered him in the Garden of Eden.

Group Questions:

1. Do you hear any hope in the promise of a Savior who we find named in the Bible as Jesus?
2. Did Adam and Eve deserve God's love and this promise of hope?
3. According to what we have heard so far, does anyone truly deserve this promise from a perfect God?

Leader Information: God promised to send a deliverer who would overcome Satan and release mankind from the penalty of death. None of us deserves that promise, but God showed grace. Grace is “giving what is needed” instead of “giving what is deserved.” Even though we saw in creation that God has awesome power, He still cares about each one of us. Imagine, He offers forgiveness to us when we rebel against His leadership. We would be foolish not to appreciate, respect and even fear Him.

Read to the Group: If we ended the story right here you will not get a balanced picture of God. God has a problem if you can imagine one so great having a problem. On the one hand He is a righteous God, and a God of justice who cannot tolerate sin. On the other hand, He is a God of love, mercy and grace (*hold up one hand to show righteousness and justice and then the other to show love, mercy and grace*). In this video we will continue to see how God solves this problem through Jesus, satisfying both His righteousness and justice, as well as His love, mercy and grace (*bring the two hands together showing a new way*).

We will discover that God, who is a spirit, came to earth in a human body as Jesus Christ, God's son. In this way Jesus could live on earth as we live, yet, not sin. The first man, Adam, represented us all and he failed. But Jesus a new Adam-type representative, would stand against Satan. Since Jesus did not break any of God's laws, He qualified as an innocent sacrifice. He could then take on Himself the punishment we deserve for our sin. In this way,

God's justice would be satisfied, yet His love and mercy could also be made available to us. Through Jesus, God offers us a restored relationship with Himself.

Read this Scripture to the Group:

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive... And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22 & 45).

Leader Information: It is important to mention somewhere in this discussion that Jesus is not a part of the creation. He is the creator. He did not evolve into God. He was God before His birth.

Leader Scriptures:

“But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared” (Titus 3:4).

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:13-16).

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 3:9)

Group Question :

1. Why did Adam and Eve's sin condemn us ALL to die?

Read to the Group: Adam brought sin and death into the world. Adam is our first forefather. We are all his descendants. Remember, Adam and Eve had perfect parentage, lived in a perfect environment and did not inherit anything bad from their ancestors, yet they sinned. The most perfect representatives ever possible for mankind failed. So when Adam sinned he not only changed the future for himself, but for us as well. When Adam sinned he ruined the perfect relationship he had with God.

Because of this, the perfection of the world was also ruined. He started a chain of events bringing much sorrow into the world. When Adam chose to disobey God he would be choosing Satan's destiny: eternal separation and punishment in Hell. Adam's eternal separation also

meant our eternal separation from God. Therefore death included:

- Separation from God relationally
- Separation from the body in physical death
- Separation from God forever and eternal punishment

Read this Scripture to the Group:

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).



Read to the Group: Adam and Eve tried to make themselves acceptable to God by making clothing for themselves. But this outward appearance was not enough to restore the relationship (*show the bridge illustration as you present the following information*).

All people have a place in their heart that only God can fill. Not all people recognize the need, but you will hear phrases such as, “My life is empty and vain” (SYU-KUNGDE) or “My life has no meaning.” Others will be living with daily fear and anger.

The fact that all cultures have gods in their background, suggests that all have a need for God. In the beginning of time, God established a relationship with us, but that union was broken by sin. Adam and Eve tried to re-establish that relationship but their way didn't work. Today we also try to do things to make ourselves acceptable to God, but none of these are good enough. Only Jesus can reestablish that union.

Group Questions:

1. Did Adam and Eve suffer consequences for their sin?
2. Even though they had to move out of the perfect garden, did God offer them forgiveness?
3. Have we all suffered for sins we have committed?
4. Do you think God offers forgiveness today to us?
5. What difference could it make to you if He did?

Read this Scripture to the Group:

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Transition Statement: In their perfect garden, Adam and Eve failed to obey God. Will the harsher life outside the Garden bring people to faith in God? We would think that the children of Adam and Eve would learn a great lesson from the tragic mistake of their parents. The next video selection will show us just how much their children learned about respect and trust of God. We will see it now (*or next time when we meet*).



The Bridge Illustration

#1



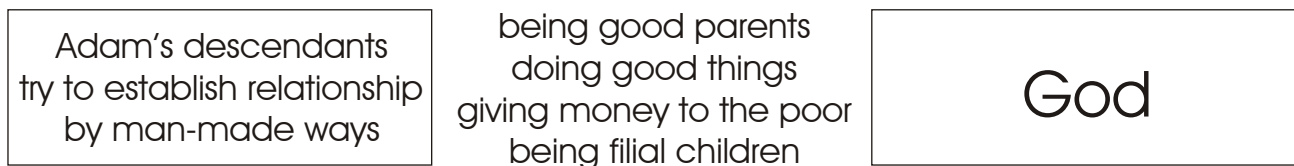
#2



#3



#4



#5

