



SHARING GOD'S STORY

WEEK 2

Over the next few weeks, we will go deeper into God's Story. Last week, we worked through our own stories as we thought through how God has worked in our lives. As we share our experiences with others, we need to be equipped on how to share the Good News of Jesus, God's Story. God's Story is woven throughout the Bible and throughout time. At its basics are 1. God's Perfection and Plan, 2. Our Problem, 3. God's Remedy, and 4. Our Response. We invite you to spend time in each week's five devotions. Each day will highlight Scripture, have some explanation and application, along with a few questions to ponder throughout the day. This is not intended to be an educational experience. Take what you are reading and talk about it with someone to spur on spiritual conversation with them. Pray each day that God would give you boldness and open doors for you to talk to someone about God's Story.

DON'T WORRY, JUST SAY IT

GOD'S PERFECTION AND PLAN

DAY 1 / CREATOR

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good..." (Gen. 1:1-4)

When we begin to talk about God's Story, we need to have a healthy understanding of who God is. Narrowing God down to 5 days is not easy to do. Our human minds have a hard time grabbing onto just how BIG God really is while also grabbing onto how personal He is. It's impossible for me to know what is happening in every house in my neighborhood, what's up-to-the-minute across the country, what's developing on the other side of the world, or even what's around every star in the sky. But God does.

He created everything by His word. He created everything out of nothing. He gave shape to the planets. It's like His fingers were molding the height of the mountains and depths of the seas as a child forms objects with Play-dough. He created with precision and detail and complexity. He created with variety and imagination. He created with structure and functionality. Everything we see and beyond was created by Him. And all that He innovated was GOOD! There weren't prototypes. There weren't failures. He never went back to the "drawing board."

We are His handiwork. We are unique from other creatures as we were formed in His likeness. And He gave life to us with His breath. "In Him, we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28). He enjoys having a personal relationship with each one of us. Just think about all of this for a minute (60 seconds). Turn off all sounds and all lights. Look around you. Consider all that you see and hear. Where did it all come from? Be amazed at how it exists. Be astounded at how it grows. Be knocked over that you could not create 1% of it if you even tried.

Talk with God about how amazed you are with Him and His work.

For further study: John 1:3-4, Jeremiah 10:12-13, Psalm 33:6-9, Hebrews 11:3

DON'T WORRY, JUST SAY IT

GOD'S PERFECTION AND PLAN

DAY 2 / SOVEREIGN

⁹ Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and no one is like Me. ¹⁰ I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done, saying: My plan will take place, and I will do all My will. (Isaiah 46:9-10)

God has already shown Himself to be unique as the Creator of the Universe. It shows His power and His wisdom. Yet, God did not create and put His creation on a shelf or in a display box. He participates with it. He engages it. He has a plan for it. He has a plan for you.

God is all powerful. He rules over His creation. We may develop our plans, but God directs our steps. No king or authority dictates rules without God managing it. Nothing happens where God isn't watching. Whatever He wants, it happens. He is the ruler over all. He can take bad things and work them for good.

God is all knowing. Nothing is hidden from Him. God is able to see the end at the beginning in order to develop the perfect plan. He knows what you need before you ask it. He knows what you are going to say before you say it. He knows when you wake up. He knows how you like your coffee. He knows if you don't like coffee. He knows what brings you joy. He knows what causes you pain. He has even numbered the hairs on your head. He has plans for you. Good plans for you. Hopeful plans for you.

God's sovereignty can bring us great comfort, but it can also bring us great confusion. If God is all powerful, all knowing, and the master planner...then why so much pain? Maybe He isn't so loving or so caring. We'll see later this week that He is extremely loving. And we'll get into the source of pain next week. It doesn't come from God. And yes, He knows about it. And yes, He can do something about it. And yes, He has done something about it. We'll see that in week 3.

Talk to God about your doubts and concerns of His sovereignty. Write out a few of these verses about God's sovereignty and His good plan for you. Put them in places where you can be encouraged by them.

For further study: Psalm 103:19, Psalm 135:6, Luke 12:6-7, Luke 1:37, Isaiah 14:27, Matthew 6:8, Psalm 139:1-18, Romans 8:28, Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 1:6, 1 Chronicles 29:11-13

DON'T WORRY, JUST SAY IT

GOD'S PERFECTION AND PLAN

DAY 3 / HOLY

⁴ "When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" "Here I am," he answered. ⁵ "Do not come closer," He said. "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." (Exodus 3:4-5)

God is unique in His power. He is unique in His knowledge. There is no one like our God. And we were formed in His image, in His likeness. Yet, God is not a human. Humans are not gods. He is entirely unique in every way, including His perfection. Yet, the Creator enjoys interaction with His people. He has formed relationships with man since the beginning with Adam and Eve. He is not distant. He's never away on vacation. He relates to us like a father does to his children. We can talk to Him.

However, God deserves reverence and respect because of His perfection, His holiness. As much as He calls His chosen people "friends" and "sons and daughters," His perfection demands that we approach Him with awe and worship. There is no one Holy like Him. The angels proclaim "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD" (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8). They don't proclaim "Love, Love, Love is the LORD" even though He is love. They don't proclaim "Mighty, Mighty, Mighty is the LORD" even though He is mighty. The Spirit of God is called the *Holy* Spirit. We even call God's Word the *Holy* Bible.

To be holy means to be set apart from the rest. Because God is unlike any other as He is pure from impurities, objects and people are to be consecrated (cleaned, purified) to be in His presence. Objects associated with God become holy such as the holy temple, holy mountain, holy ark, holy ground, holy day, holy incense, holy garments, holy city, holy people, holy nation, etc. "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD."

Spend time in prayer and/or worship. Go ahead and raise your hands, lie on the floor, or get on your knees. Perhaps take your shoes off today and walk around the office or house as a reminder of God's holiness. Maybe do some extra cleaning to think about holiness.

For further study: Exodus 15:11, 1 Samuel 2:2, Psalm 99:9, Leviticus 16:2, 1 Peter 1:15-16

DON'T WORRY, JUST SAY IT

GOD'S PERFECTION AND PLAN

DAY 4 / JUST

⁴ For You have upheld my just cause; You are seated on Your throne as a righteous judge. ⁵ You have rebuked the nations: You have destroyed the wicked; You have erased their name forever and ever. ⁶ The enemy has come to eternal ruin; You have uprooted the cities, and the very memory of them has perished. ⁷ But the LORD sits enthroned forever; He has established His throne for judgment. ⁸ He judges the world with righteousness; He executes judgment on the nations with fairness. ⁹ The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. (Psalm 9:4-9)

When we think about God and His activity in the world, most people want to know that God is actively providing justice. Apparent lack of justice is the thing that gets people disbelieving in God. They don't see justice happening. Sickesses, diseases, war, abuse, famine, destruction, and especially, when it happens to children, are hard things to make sense out of. "Why would God allow such things to happen?"

The Bible is very clear that God is just. He is the ruler over all. He is all powerful. He is all knowing. He is Holy. His justice is right. He sets the standard for right and wrong. He knows good versus evil. Evil angers God. And He doesn't sit by watching evil pervade and not get involved. He is the judge. His justice provides refuge for the oppressed. It brings relief to the abused.

His justice is active on the earth. He does execute judgment. Evil and wickedness will not get away without vengeance and retribution. He does not play favorites or show prejudice. No one can bribe, negotiate, or con their way out of His justice. There is no appeal court. His justice may not be immediate or swift in our eyes, but He is not slow in keeping justice. He will bring final justice in the future for all of eternity. His justice moves according to His holiness and His love.

Write down injustices that anger you. They also anger God. Pray that you would see how God is just.

For further study: Colossians 3:25, Romans 2:11, 2 Timothy 4:8, 14; Deuteronomy 32:35-36; 2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 10:30-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9; Romans 12:19-21; Nahum 1:2-3

DON'T WORRY, JUST SAY IT

GOD'S PERFECTION AND PLAN

DAY 5 / LOVE

"...the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued to extend faithful love to you." (Jeremiah 31:3)

God is love. Perhaps no other attribute of God is more emphasized in the New Testament than the love of God. Yet, God's love is nothing new. He loved before He created. He loved throughout the Old Testament. The above reference in Jeremiah is just one example. He loved you before you existed. In love, He created a plan to rescue people from their problem of sin before the problem of sin entered the world.

The only reason we know how to love is because God is love and showed us what true love is. His love is unconditional. It's not based on your love for Him. It's not based on how good you are. It's not based on how good looking you are. Nothing can separate you from His love. Nothing can make Him love you more. Nothing can make Him love you less. His love is unwavering.

His love is not like a brotherly love or a love of a friend. It is intimate. It is like a groom for his bride. It's like a father or a mother for their children. It is expressed personally and affectionately. It is full of zeal and excitement. His love is so strong that He sacrificed His own Son to appease His Holiness and Justice for humanity's sin and unrighteousness. His love forgives. His love covers a multitude of sin.

Now, it's doesn't mean that God doesn't hate or is not disgruntled. God hates sin. He distances Himself from those who practice wickedness (though He is not far from those who call out to Him – Acts 17:27). He hates pride, lying, stirring up trouble, dishonest business, murder, hate, etc. He is a jealous God who wants our complete loyalty. He gives grace to the humble.

Consider your closest relationships. How you would describe the love? Pray, asking God to help you see the love He has for you and to thank Him for that love.

For further study: 1 John 4:8ff; Romans 5:8; Deuteronomy 7:7; John 3:16; Luke 15:3-10, 20; Romans 8:37-39; Ephesians 1:4-5, 2:4-5; Psalm 118; Jeremiah 44:4-8; Proverbs 6:16-19; James 4:5

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