



Week of February 27 Resting in Eden¹

Overview:

Did you ever wonder...Why are we here? How did all of this come to be? What are the origins of our universe, our story, and our purpose? In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we see a cosmic story unfolding—an epic narrative of God shaping a good and meaningful world, what went wrong, and how God is redeeming the mess and restoring us to something good. Over the next twelve weeks, we will explore new ways to study this narrative and learn how to apply those tools to all of Scripture.

Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Consider how our worldview of rest and identity affects our daily routines and disposition.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We encounter the Father daily.* God the Father speaks to us through the Bible, and we commune with him through prayer.

Conversation Starters:

- What is your favorite genre of book/movie?
- Do you have a daily/weekly habit that you do to unwind? If so, what is it? If not, what might you do if you made the time?

Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion

If you were to read the various literature written by other people groups around the same time as Genesis was written, you would see many similarities within the “Epic Narratives” or stories of how creation came to be. These epic narratives told the origin of the god/s, creation, and order, as well as the function of each character in the story. If you were to dig into stories like, “Enuma Elish”, “Atrahasis Epic”, or “Gilgamesh Epic,” you would see gods co-mingling to create other lesser gods to serve and protect the creator gods. You would see humans created to serve gods, then wiped out because they were loud and annoying. You would see lesser gods rising to kill higher gods, then their bodies used to create the new world, all of which is subject to serve them. Then when you open Genesis, you see a similar narrative of God creating order out of chaotic waters. Light and darkness, day and night, waters separate to form land but only with a word. What really should catch our eyes and ears is this: God does not create his creation to be his servant, but rather to be a place where he can be in relationship with his creation.

¹ This week's lesson was written by Allison Dykhouse; edited by Dawn Gentry.

As we begin to look at Genesis two, watch how Yahweh interacts and wants to be in relationship with his creation and how this affects our worldview of God and ourselves.

As your group begins, pull out “Origins: Genesis 1 & 2 Comparison” for reference throughout the conversation. It can be found in the back of the Origins notebook or at www.cccomaha.org/origins

- **Read Genesis 2:1-2:3**

- *God finished his work and rested. In epic narrative, this word rested is not like our 20th century thought of putting your feet up and taking a nap. Rather, it is a ceasing of the work of creating, not out of weariness, but out of completion and satisfaction with the work. It is taking up residence and enjoying the creation that was just made. This analogy might help: this resting is more like a newly elected president, moving into the White House and beginning to do the work they have just been elected to do. God is satisfied with creation and now enjoys relating to and watching the creation he has made, as it functions the way in which he created it.*
 - Does this change the way you look at these verses? If yes, how so?
- Think about the way our world defines rest. What is similar and what is different to God’s rest as intended in Genesis 2?
- As a culture and individuals, why is it difficult for us to rest?

- **Read Genesis 1:27-31 & 2:4-2:9**

- As you read the two texts that describe God’s creation of humans, what similarities and changes do you see between the two?
- Two things distinguish Genesis from other “Epic Narratives”:
 - *God identifies himself.*
 - *Yahweh God gives not only his image to his creation but also his breath to bring him to life.*

Why could these things matter to our audience? Remember the target audience, Israelites who are in the desert, saved from generations of slavery, re-discovering who they are.

Respond and Pray:

- Since rest often seems hard for our culture, invite God into an aspect of your life that feels overwhelming or exhausting. Tell him one of the aspects that seems to be heaviest and ask him for his authority and provision to reign over that area. Take a moment and pray over one another in this area.
- As we remember our identity in God’s creation as image bearers, how might intentional rhythms of rest and co-laboring help keep God at the center of our lives? Does anything need to stay, change, or add to your rhythms to help you keep this mindset and reliance on God? How can the group walk alongside you in this? Break into groups of 2-3 to share and pray for one another.

For further study:

- Bible Project Video – Sabbath - <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sabbath-video/>
- John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World*, (Waterbrook, 2019). See also Comer’s web resources which include exercises for the practices of silence, solitude, sabbath, simplicity, and slowing - <https://johnmarkcomer.com/blog/unhurry>

To help you in the process, some additional resources—including books, videos, and podcasts—can be found at cccomaha.org/origins. If you need additional help, please reach out to a member of the Adult Ministries team.