



Week of May 15 Origins¹

Overview:

At some point in our lives, we have to 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 the 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, restoring us to something good. This is the final week of the Origins series.

Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- For the group to consider how to recognize and interpret God's correction.

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:

- Have you ever been in a place where you did not understand the language? Describe the experience.
- What other languages have you studied? What language(s) would you like to learn (and why)?

Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion

The story of the Tower of Babel (or Babylon) is familiar to many of us, but it is often misunderstood. It is an example of God's correction, an act of intervention to prevent disaster and move humanity back onto a healthy path. It was not an act of anger, but of love. God loved the world too much to let them fall into chaos again.

Correction and discipline are not enjoyable in the moment, but ultimately lead to our good. When we fail to follow God's plan, whether in rebellion or indifference, he often allows circumstances which force us to reevaluate or shift our direction. Not all suffering is discipline (look at Job), just as not all comfort is blessing (the Rich Young Man in Matthew 19). Studying Biblical examples of God's correction as we live in honest community helps build the tools we need to discern God's discipline and provides us the means to respond in a healthy way.

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

- **Read Genesis 11:1-9; Genesis 1:28, 8:15-17**
 - What did the people in Genesis 11 hope to do? What was their ultimate goal?
 - How does that goal differ from God's commands to Adam and Noah?
 - How would you characterize God's response in verses 6-7?
 - i.e., angry, sad, wrathful, frustrated, loving, etc.
 - What reason does God give for confusing the language?
 - Why would altering the language scatter the people?
 - What do you think God was trying to prevent/change?
- **Read Acts 1:1-8, 6:7, 8:1-3**
 - Describe what happened in the church through these passages. What similarities do you see between the early church and the men of Shinar in Genesis 11?
 - What did the persecution force the church to do?
- **Read Genesis 11:27-12:5**
 - Where did Terah set out to go? Where did he end up? Where did God lead Abram?
 - What, if anything does that suggest to you?
 - How is God's command in 12:1-3 different from what the men of Shinar wanted in 11:4?
 - How does this add to your understanding of God's decision to confuse the languages?

Summarize and Respond:

- How might you describe God's correction? What are some characteristics similar or unique in each example? Do you think any of these situations could have been avoided?
- How does correction differ from punishment? How can we discern God's correction?
- If comfortable sharing, tell us about a time you sensed God's correction.

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- Consider...
 - any prompting of God you may be avoiding
 - if God is leading you somewhere you aren't sure you want to go
 - if you've chosen comfort or personal power over growing God's kingdom
- *Lord, thank you for loving us enough to correct us. Give us eyes to see your path and the strength to take the next step towards you.*

For Further Study:

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