

DVD Teaching Notes

As you watch the video segment for session 1, use the following outline to record anything that stands out to you.

God's Big Idea ... the point of the story is to be with us

The result of rejecting God's vision

The Upper and Lower Story perspectives of Cain and Abel's conflict

God's relentless efforts to get us back

DVD Discussion

1. When God looked at creation and declared it both "good" and "very good," what do you think he was trying to express?

Randy suggested that God looks at you and says, "Looking at you is better than an ocean view ... or watching a sunrise." How does that make you feel?

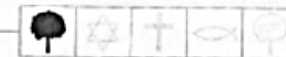
*What is the apple of God's eye?
The magnum opus of his work?
PEOPLE—US! Go figure, but it's true.*

2. Genesis 1:26–27 (*The Story*, pp. 2–3) says that we are made in the image of God. How do we, as people, actually reflect the image of God?
3. If you could take a walk with God in the perfect garden of paradise, just like you would with a friend, what would you ask him and why?

4. In a normal day, what gets in the way of you taking a walk with God and talking about what is on your heart?
5. Even though Adam and Eve began walking in perfect fellowship with their Maker, God still gave them freedom to reject this perfect life. What does this spiritual reality say about the power of the choices we make each day?
6. Adam and Eve made a choice to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They rejected God's vision for their lives and declared that they wanted to run their own universe and be their own god. How do you see that same sinful desire and behavior in our lives today and how does it influence our daily walk with God?

God's grand vision was to go on walks with his children; to be in their presence. God creates the Lower Story so he can come down from the Upper Story and do life with us.

7. If God truly loved Adam and Eve, why would he throw them out of the garden? Randy said that God's choice to drive Adam and Eve out of the garden was really an "act of grace." Do you agree or disagree with his statement and why do you feel this way?
8. What are ways to identify that we are about to enter into sinful and rebellious actions and how can we stop before we have crossed the line?



9. Read movement 1 of *The Story* (p. 10 of this participant's guide). What is the big theme of this first movement?



MOVEMENT 1: The Story of the Garden (Genesis 1–11)

In the Upper Story, God creates the Lower Story. His vision is to come down and be with us in a beautiful garden. The first two people reject God's vision and are escorted from paradise. Their decision introduces sin into the human race and keeps us from community with God. At this moment God gives a promise and launches a plan to get us back. The rest of the Bible is God's story of how he kept that promise and made it possible for us to enter a loving relationship with him.

Closing Prayer

As you take time to pray, here are some ideas to get you started:

- Ask God to help you appreciate the beauty of his creation and to be a good steward and caretaker of the world he has made.
- Give praise to God for the people in your life who have revealed his grace, love, and presence to you.
- Pray for wisdom and discernment to recognize Satan's tactics as he tries to deceive you and the people you care about.

Between Sessions

Personal Reflections

Take time this week to meditate on the depth of God's love for human beings. Why would he keep pursuing us even after we have rebelled and rejected him? How can you express thanks for his seeking love? What can you do to celebrate the good news that God pursues you, even when you are not embracing his will and desires for you?

Personal Action

Take a walk outside and notice the beauty of what God has made. Look at the intricacies of a leaf or the expanse of the sky. Thank God for making this amazing world. As you walk, seek to talk to God as though you were two friends walking in a garden. Tell him about your life, feelings, joys, and fears. Ask him to help you learn to walk with him each and every day.

Read for Next Session

Take time before your next small group to read chapter 2 of *The Story*.