

PROMISES KEPT BIBLE OVERVIEW, WEEK ONE (GENESIS 1 – 2)

OPENING QUESTION (2 mins)

If you had to sum up the message of the Bible in one sentence, what would you say? There are lots of great ways to answer this—you don't need to look for a "right answer"!

VIDEO TALK (12 mins)

APPLY TIME... (10 mins)

1. How does humanity's place in creation...

- **make us humble?** We are not God. We are not ultimately in charge. We depend on Another for everything.
- **make us valuable?** We are, uniquely, made in God's image, to relate to him and to reflect his image.
- **give us purpose in life?** God has put us here to know him, and look after his creation (including other people).

2. There are many issues in society today where knowing we are creatures, made in God's image, to rule his world, should shape our view. Pick a few now, and discuss what Gen 1 v 26-31 has to say about them.

Your group will come up with what particularly concerns them, so allow them to shape the discussion (as long as you feel Genesis 1 v 26-31 has something to say about that issue!) Encourage people to use v 26-31, not just their own views.

Some ideas:

- *The beginning and end of life.* Since God created life, and we are made in his image, each life has intrinsic value. We are not God, so should not presume to end a life simply because it is unwanted, be that our life or someone else's. So these verses help shape a Christian response to both abortion and euthanasia. **Note:** Remember that there may be those in your group who this is a very sensitive issue for.
- *The environment.* God has given us the job of ruling this world, and we should do so in a sustainable way. We are not simply to exploit the world's resources without doing so responsibly. Equally, we are to rule. When some argue that humanity should just get out of the way, that we are the problem, they are half right—but humanity must also be the solution.
- *Atheism and secularism.* If our core identity is as image-bearing creatures, we must resist attempts to make ourselves God. Without God, things don't make sense.
- *Science.* Not everything can be explained by science—true scientific experimentation is seeking to discover the *How* and *When*, but not the *Who* or the *Why*. Science can't tell us who we are, whether and why we have value, or why we are here.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR OUR HEARTS AND LIVES (7 mins)

You could talk about these as a group or, probably better break into twos or threes to discuss. You may want to pick one or two that you know are particularly helpful for your group and focus on those)

1. Are there any areas in your life where you need to be reminded that you're not God, not in overall charge?
2. Where do you get your sense of value from? The shifting opinions of others, or the changing foundation of your looks, career, or health? What would change in your emotions and outlook if you based your identity on being made and valued by God?
3. What would change in how you view yourself and your life if your main purpose each day was to know God, live under his rule, and work in his world as he directs you?

PROMISE KEPT (15 mins)

The implicit promise of Genesis 1 – 2 is that the creation will be "very good" (1 v 31). That is what God says this world will be like. BUT today, our world is only a poor reflection of the world as it was created. Can the world God promised be recovered, or has his plan gone wrong?

Read John 1:1-5, 9

1. What similarities are there between these verses and Genesis 1 v 1-5?

- Both start "in the beginning".
 - Both mention God, and his Word.
 - Both talk about creation.
 - Both speak about light.
- At the beginning of his Gospel about Jesus, John deliberately uses creation-ish language.

2. What do we learn about "the Word"?

- **v 1:** He was with God from eternity—in fact he is God.
- **v 2:** The Word is eternal.
- **v 3:** Everything was made through "the Word". Here, he is seen to be a person.
- **v 4:** The Word gives life.
- **v 5:** The life (or "light") that the Word gives is misunderstood by those who are without it ("darkness").

3. Read verse 14. What is amazing about these words?

The eternal, creating, powerful Word became a human being. God stepped into his creation as a creature. At a particular point in history, it

was possible to see God, the One who came from the Father's side and lived on earth.

- **God's word brought light to creation (Genesis 1 v 5)—here, the Word became flesh to bring "light", too. What is that "light" (John 1 v 4)? "Life".** The "light" that God became human to bring was life.
- **This Word was called Jesus (v 17) ... How is God "creating" through Jesus coming to earth?** By bringing life.

If your group is struggling with this question, you might like to ask these questions to help them to the answer:

- What have we seen is being echoed in John 1? (Genesis 1—God's creation.)
- How did God create, and bring life, in Genesis 1? (Through his Word.)
- What has come to earth at the start of John's Gospel (v14)? (His Word.)
- What should we expect to see God's Word doing, that John's alerted us to in the way he's begun his Gospel? (Creating, and bringing life.)

SOME QUESTIONS FOR OUR HEARTS AND LIVES (7 mins)

God's children (John 1 v 12) are not only part of his original creation, but also part of his new creation, begun when the Word became flesh to bring the light of life to the world.

1. **What difference does that make to your life?**
2. **Do you think about what can be enjoyed in this world too much, or too little?**
3. **Do you care for it too much, or too little?**
4. **Do you think of your future as part of God's re-creation too much, or too little?**

PRAY (7 mins)

Praise God...

that he is the Creator, and for making you to enjoy life in his creation.
that he sent Jesus to bring life and begin recreating this imperfect world.

Confess to God...

ways you make too much, or too little, of his world.

Ask God...

to help you to be humble, to find your value in being made by God, and to live as he created you to each day (you might want to pray for specific ways in which you need his help in doing these things).

EXTRA BIBLE TIME (to slot in before 'Promise Kept' section)

Genesis 2 focuses on the climax of God's creation: humanity.

Read Genesis 2 v 18-25

1. **What is "not good"?** That the man is alone (18).
2. **What does God do about it (v 21-22)?** He makes a "helper" for him—a woman. Note: The word helper is not a negative description. God is sometimes described as a "helper" (eg: Deuteronomy 33 v 29; Psalm 118 v 7). Men and women are different, yet equally bear the image of God.
3. **The man responds with a love song (v 23—you may not rate it much!). What relationship have they been made for (v 24)?** Marriage (see Mark 10 v 5-12, where Genesis 2 v 24 is linked with marriage in v 11-12). Sex is the physical expression this committed relationship.
4. **What kind of relationship do they enjoy in God's creation (v 25)?** A very trusting, intimate one. They're able to be completely vulnerable in front of each other, without shame or worry.
5. **What do these verses tell us about men and women?** Men and women are equally valuable, made by God, and yet different, made to "go with" one another. God made us to enjoy the intimacy, trust and joy of a committed, lifelong, sexual relationship (marriage).