

CHAPTER 1 - CREATION & CORRUPTION

ICEBREAKER QUESTION

- Where is your favorite place you've ever traveled?

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the story of God. And, like all stories, this one has a beginning.

The story of the Bible begins with the main character, God, bringing our world into being, into order, and into its purpose. After each act of creation, he declared that it was good. The only thing that wasn't good was that the first man, Adam, was alone. So Eve, the first woman, was created. Together, they were given the world to rule, to enjoy, and to establish God's purposes.

God set the first humans in a garden and lived among them. In that garden, he placed two trees that represented two paths—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The fatal decision that followed and its tragic results have affected all of human history. Humanity would pass down this fatal flaw, this inner corruption, from generation to generation. But for God's intervention, the evil and darkness would have prevailed. Yet, his promise of salvation—deliverance from evil and death—began to unfold in that very Garden of Eden. This beginning story is central to every other story the Scriptures tell.

DISCUSSION

LEADER TIP: Ground your discussion time directly in the Scriptures as much as possible. Encourage group members to open their Bibles to different Scripture passages as they are brought up in conversation.

- What is something new you learned in the Scriptures this week? Was anything confusing or difficult to understand?
- Pick 2-3 "Study" questions from the chapter to discuss. Here are a few possible places to start:
 - Exercise 1, Study Question 2
 - Exercise 4, Study Question 2
 - Exercise 5, Study Question 1

APPLICATION

- How has your view of God been re-shaped by what you've studied? What about your view of your own life as a human being?
- Pick 1-2 "Reflect" and "Respond" exercises to discuss. For example:
 - Exercise 1, Respond
 - Exercise 5, Respond

PRAYER

Ask God to soften your heart, open your mind, and teach you more about the tragedy of your own sin and your need for his love and mercy.