



ADAM ONE COUPLE SYMBOL: SABBATH



UNDERSTANDING

(for your preparation as a leader)

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DISCUSSION

(to use with your group)

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Goal: That all participants may know they are beloved sons and daughters of God through His covenant with Adam, sealed by the Sabbath.

Note to the leader: Some of the content in this chapter is similar to the first chapter of "The Crux." If you have recently studied that chapter, be sure to highlight some of the key differences. Identity and the Sabbath might be good subjects to emphasize. Another option is to tell your group that some of this content is similar; you can ask them if they have gained any new understanding of these topics.



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UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

Read Genesis 1:26–28, 2:16–17, 3:1–7, 2:1–3

CONTEXT

Context in the Story of Salvation: Creation Stories

The story of salvation begins in the book of Genesis with creation. Oftentimes, when we approach a text like Genesis, we can start to think about questions of science and evolution. Those questions are good — but those won't be covered in this chapter. Feel free to ask a FOCUS missionary or check the Catechism for answers to those questions. Today, we are going to explore a different question: Why was the world created?

Context for Our Story Today: Image and Likeness

Genesis 1:26–28

God sets His very image and likeness in Adam and Eve, as well as in each of us. But what does “image and likeness” mean? For the ancient Hebrews, it meant more than just having some godlike qualities. In fact, the next time this word is used in Genesis, it describes the relationship between Adam and his own son, Seth: Adam “became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth” (Gn 5:3). This shows us that being made in the image and

likeness of God is meant to communicate an intimate relationship. Adam and Eve, and each one of us, are beloved children of God. Thus, from their creation, Adam and Eve had a deep, familial relationship with God as their loving Father.

The Catechism expresses this relationship well: “Of all visible creatures only man is ‘able to know and love his creator’. He is ‘the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake,’ and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life...The first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him, in a state that would be surpassed only by the glory of the new creation in Christ” (CCC 356, 374).

However, this identity as beloved sons and daughters immediately comes under attack. Once we see and understand the depth of Adam and Eve’s relationship with God, their upcoming fall becomes even more tragic.

CLIMAX: IDENTITY CRISIS

Genesis 2:16–17

In Genesis 2:16 – 17, God gives Adam and Eve a commandment: Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, why would God, a loving father, give Adam and Eve this command? We know that God wants only their good, so He knew this tree was bad for them. But this raises another question: Why have a bad tree in the garden in the first place?

The answer is freedom (CCC 396). God gives us the power to choose, and this free will allows us to love. So God offers His law — only one rule — to give Adam and Eve the opportunity to love. If they had no

choice, they would be either robots or slaves. God's desire is for a loving relationship.

Genesis 3:1-7

The serpent intervenes at this critical moment of choice. In Genesis 3:1, the serpent asks Eve, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees of the garden?" But this isn't what God commanded; only *one* tree was forbidden. The serpent is trying to get Eve to doubt God's goodness by exaggerating the command.

Eve responds by affirming God's commandment — and then she takes it just a little bit further. She says that, even if she touches it, she will die. But this isn't specifically what God commanded: He didn't say anything about touching the fruit. Eve is already slipping into distrust.

Then comes Satan's lie: "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." In other words, he is saying, "God is holding out on you. You could be someone else. You could do better."

Now, here is the irony: Who are Adam and Eve already like? God! They are being tempted to pursue something they already have.

But the lie works. As the Catechism states, "Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command" (CCC 397). They abandon what they knew of God's fatherhood, quickly exchanging it for a false perception of Him as cruel and distant, limiting their freedom.

This sin has drastic consequences for the human family. All people have inherited this fallen state (CCC 402). We now suffer separation from God, a loss of harmony within ourselves, conflict with others and strife in the world (CCC 399 – 400).

APPLICATION: THE SABBATH

Genesis 2:1-3

Since Adam and Eve, the temptation to define ourselves apart from God is enduring. People often seek their identity in everything but God: Whether it be sports, academics, relationships, etc., we are constantly looking to find our value and worth in the things of this world. How can we get back to trusting in God's love for us, knowing that He is taking care of us and that our deepest identity lies in our relationship with Him?

It is almost as if God knew this was going to be a problem for us. In Genesis 2:1 – 3, we read that “God rested on the seventh day” and that He “blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” We know this as the Sabbath. Why is this seventh day so special? And what difference does the Sabbath make for us?

As we read, the Sabbath occurs on the seventh day. In Hebrew, the word for seven has the same root as the word oath, as in a covenant. “In Hebrew, ‘to swear an oath’ means literally, ‘to seven oneself’” (Scott Hahn, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* 51). As you may remember from the introduction, a covenant is an exchange of persons, wherein the two parties give themselves to one another so completely that they actually become family (as in marriage).

From this, we can infer that, by creating the world in seven days and blessing the seventh day in particular, God is making a covenant with Adam and Eve. In creation itself, He wanted to establish His fatherhood and remind us of our covenantal relationship with Him.

Both ancient and modern Jews celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday. As Catholics, we celebrate the fulfillment of the Sabbath on Sunday, the Lord's Day, because it is the day of Jesus' resurrection. God gives

Israel the Sabbath to remind them to Whom they truly belong. We are sustained not merely by our work, as slaves would be, but by Him. On the Lord's Day, we remember to trust Him as our Father and provider and honor the relationship we have with Him as sons and daughters. Going to Mass on Sunday is our reminder to find our identity in God, our Father, and not in the things of this world. (For further reading, see CCC 2168 – 2196.)

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we learned that God created man in His image and likeness, and that this means we are beloved sons and daughters of God. Our relationship with Him forms our deepest identity. We also saw how Adam and Eve fell into sin by not trusting in God's fatherly care for them. Finally, we discussed how the Sabbath is a weekly reminder of our covenant with God, our Father, and that our true identity lies in Him, rather than in other things. The symbol to remember this covenant is the Sabbath, represented by the number 7 on the calendar.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

Genesis 1:26-28, 2:16-17, 3:1-7, 2:1-3

Reminder to the leader of the goal for this chapter: That all participants may know they are beloved sons and daughters of God through His covenant with Adam, sealed by the Sabbath.

OPENER:

1. Throughout the ages, what are some of the biggest questions human beings have asked about life?

(Share aloud with your group.)

Today, we are going to look at a story that answers some of those big questions: the creation account in Genesis. It's here that we learn about God's first covenant with Adam and what it teaches us about who we are and what we were made for.

CONTEXT: IMAGE AND LIKENESS

Read Genesis 1:26–28

2. In Genesis 1:26, God makes man in His image and likeness. What does this mean?

Allow the group to discuss. Note: Wait until the next question to reveal that it means we are sons and daughters of God.

3. Let's look at another passage of Scripture to dig deeper into this concept. Could someone please read Genesis 5:3? In light of this, what does being made in God's image and likeness mean?

Answer: It means that we are beloved sons and daughters and that God is our Father.

CLIMAX: IDENTITY CRISIS

Read Genesis 2:16–17

4. Why do you think God gives Adam and Eve the command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?

Answer: God wanted to give them an opportunity to express their love for Him. Without this choice, they would be slaves, not sons — always destined to do whatever God says. The command gives them a free choice; there is no love without freedom.

Read Genesis 3:1–7

5. In Genesis 3:1, the serpent enters the story. Reflecting on the serpent's words to Eve in this verse, how does the devil try to twist Eve's perception of God's identity?

Answer: The serpent wants Eve to question whether God is trustworthy and tempts her to doubt God's goodness. He portrays God as withholding things from her, as opposed to a loving Father who made her for freedom.

6. What is wrong with Eve's response to the serpent about God's command?

Answer: Eve exaggerates God's commandment; In Genesis 2:16 – 17, He says nothing about touching the fruit. Already she is falling into the trap of identifying God as a strict, merciless lawgiver.

7. In Genesis, there is a drama between Adam and Eve viewing God as a loving Father or a restrictive lawgiver. Our own feelings about God can sometimes be very similar, depending on the situation. Throughout your life, how have you viewed God?

Allow the group to discuss.

APPLICATION: THE SABBATH

8. Genesis reveals that our deepest identity is being God's beloved sons and daughters, but oftentimes we struggle to embrace that identity. What are some other things, good or bad, that can define our identity?

Allow the group to discuss. Possible answers may include careers, sports, success, social circles, attention on social media, relationships, sexuality, etc.

Read Genesis 2:1–3

(Share aloud with your group.)

As we read the story of salvation, we will see how God's covenants grow and expand, each with their own symbol. Here, the symbol of the first covenant is the Sabbath, a day of rest set aside to reconnect with God and focus on our relationship with Him.

Just like Adam and Eve, we need opportunities to reconnect with God and be reminded of our true identity. It is almost as if God knew this was going to be a problem for us. In Genesis 2:1 – 3, we read that "God

rested on the seventh day” and that He “blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” We know this as the Sabbath.

As we read, the Sabbath occurs on the seventh day. In Hebrew, the word for seven has the same root as the word oath, as in a covenant. “In Hebrew, ‘to swear an oath’ means literally, ‘to seven oneself’” (Scott Hahn, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* 51). As you may remember from the introduction, a covenant is an exchange of persons, where two parties give themselves to one another so completely that they actually become family (as in marriage).

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9. Does that make sense? If you had to explain the Sabbath (or the Lord’s Day, as it’s known in Christianity) to someone, what would you say?

Allow the group to answer and discuss.

10. At the heart of the Sabbath, or Lord’s Day, is going to Church. How do you view going to Mass on Sundays? What does your perspective say about how you view God and yourself?

Allow the group to discuss.

SUMMARY

(Share aloud with your group.)

In this chapter, we learned that God created man in His image and likeness and that this means we are beloved sons and daughters of God. Our relationship with Him forms our deepest identity. We also saw how Adam and Eve fell into sin by not trusting in God’s fatherly

care for them. Finally, we discussed how the Sabbath is a weekly reminder of our covenant with God, our Father, and that our true identity lies in Him, rather than other things. The symbol to remember this covenant is the Sabbath, represented by the number 7 on the calendar.

*For a further exploration of the Fall and its consequences, see "The Crux," Chapter 1.

Note: Has your group began praying *Lectio Divina* with Scripture? Your group can either download the *Lectio Divina* guide online (<https://focusoncampus.org/content/the-story-of-salvation>) or sign up for the daily email (<https://focusoncampus.org/content/story-of-salvation-daily-lectio>).

