



Chapter I

Who Am I?

UNDERSTANDING

(for your preparation as a leader)

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UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

Who am I? What am I made for?

These are some of the most important questions we face in life. And there's one famous story that points us in the right direction. It's a story you might have heard before, perhaps from your childhood. But we invite you, now that you are an adult, to take a closer look at it with more mature eyes. Genesis is a book about beginnings. In fact, the word Genesis means "beginnings." In this first chapter of the Crux, we are going to talk about what the first few chapters of Genesis tell us about God, about us and about our relationship with him.

Made for Relationship (Genesis 1:26)

In its very first chapter, the Bible makes an amazing claim about who we are — one that impacts everything about how we look at the world and live our lives: *we are made in God's image and likeness* (Genesis 1:26).

But what does that actually mean?

As in any piece of literature, the Bible uses reoccurring expressions or idioms. If you're not sure what a certain word means, you should

consider the context, to see how it's used in other settings. So, if we want to understand the meaning of being made in God's image and likeness, we should look to see if the expression is used again. And it is, in Genesis 5:3, where it describes a relationship between a son and his father. Adam has a son named Seth, and Seth is in the image and likeness of his father, Adam. In Scripture, therefore, the idea of image and likeness points to sonship.

When God says in Genesis 1 that man and woman are made in his "image and likeness," what is he saying about us? He is revealing that we are not mere creatures like the sun, moon, stars, birds, fish or animals. We are made for a profound relationship with God *as his children*. The Catholic Church puts it this way: "God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life (CCC 1).

Think about that: God did not have any *need* to create us – he is perfectly blessed in himself. Yet, as the Bible teaches, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and out of love, he freely chose to bring us into existence and fill us with his life, so that he could share his love with us. This is the first major point we want to take away from the story of Adam and Eve: When the Bible says we were made in God's "image and likeness," it's telling us we were created for a unique relationship with God as his children. And this is where we will find enduring, lasting happiness: living in friendship with God as his sons and daughters.

God's Plan (Genesis 2:15-17)

A second major point this story reveals is that God has a plan for our lives. This is something the Bible often underscores: how God loves us so much that he wants us to be happy and to be united

with him forever: “For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for woe, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). This is why he gives us his law, which includes certain commandments like, “Thou shall not kill” or “Thou shall not steal.” These are not arbitrary rules or a mere testing of obedience. God’s law flows from his love for us. He made us. He knows how we work. He knows that if we do certain things with our lives, we will thrive and be happy; and if we do other things with our lives, we will hurt ourselves and hurt others. And because he loves us, he reveals his plan for our happiness, to guide us on the path of life: “Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path” (Psalm 118:105).

We can see this also in the two commands God gave Adam in Genesis 2. Consider them carefully. First, God commands Adam to till and *keep* the garden (Genesis 2:15). The original Hebrew word translated “keep” is *shamar*, which literally means “to guard.” The word is used in the Old Testament to describe priests guarding the holy tabernacle from intruders (Numbers 1:53; 3:7-8). Adam is, therefore, being told to guard the garden like a Levitical priest would guard the sanctuary.

Second, God warns Adam not to eat from a particular tree in the garden: “You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” (Genesis 2:16-17). According to these verses, why does God give Adam this command? Is it to control him or restrict him? No. Notice how God emphasizes the tremendous freedom he is giving Adam: “you may *freely* eat of *every tree*...” There’s only one tree that God warns against because he knows that if Adam eats of it, he will be harmed: “For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). God gave this command to Adam because he loves him and doesn’t want him to be hurt.¹

The Temptation (Genesis 3:1-7)

Now we come to a third major point Genesis reveals about the human family: our fall.

One of the most famous passages in all of Scripture is the temptation of Adam and Eve. At first glance, it might appear to be a simple story about a serpent (the devil) trying to get them to eat fruit from a forbidden tree. But if we rise above a children’s-book-view of this story and read it with a more educated adult mind, we will see there’s a lot more going on.

Consider the strategy of the devil in his very first words to Eve: “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any trees of the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). Think about it. Why does the devil ask *that* question? Notice how the tone of the question is a bit negative, painting a picture of God as a restrictive God, limiting her freedom, not letting her go to any trees of the garden. But that’s not what God actually said. God’s words emphasized the great freedom he was giving them: “You may *freely* eat of *every* tree in the garden.” That sounds very generous, doesn’t it? God warned them to avoid just the one. But the devil wants Eve to think of God as being too restrictive and limiting her freedom.

¹ What is the meaning of this tree? And why is it so dangerous? The tree symbolizes the limits of the human person, dependent on God and his plan for our lives (CCC 396). God invited our first parents to accept their limitations and trust in Him. To reject our dependence on him and his plan for our lives would be to break our relationship with him as our Father, which is a tragedy worse than physical death. As the Catechism explains, “The ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom” (CCC 396). “Man’s eventual eating from this tree symbolizes his unwillingness to accept this dependence on God. Man instead uses his freedom to try to establish what is good and evil for himself apart from God. He seeks to ‘be like God’ but without God (CCC 398). This leads to tragic consequences for man—separation from God and the introduction of sin and division into the human family. Through the law given in Gen 2:16-17, God wants to protect man from this grave danger” (Edward Sri and Curtis Martin, *The Real Story* (Golden: Epic Publishing, 2012), 148).

Eve replies by saying they can eat from “some” trees, but if they so much as touch the tree in the midst of the garden, they would die (Genesis 3:2-3). But did God actually say that? No. She doesn’t mention the broad freedom God gave them in the garden. Instead, she exaggerates the one restriction in God’s law (“We can’t even touch it!”). We can see that she is starting to buy into the devil’s view of God as an arbitrary law-giver who restricts our freedom.

It’s at this moment that the devil goes in for the kill. He says to her: “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” (Genesis 3:4).

Take in what the serpent is really saying here. His stating, “You will not die,” amounts to calling God a liar. According to the serpent, the tree is not harmful after all. In fact, it’s something that will make them like God. The reason God is telling them not to eat of this tree is that he is afraid they will become like him! According to the serpent, God made up this law to keep them in the dark and under his control.

Notice how the devil is not trying to get Eve merely to break a rule. He’s trying to get her to break a relationship. That’s what the first sin is all about: questioning God’s goodness and not trusting his plan. As the Catechism explains, “Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God’s command. This is what man’s first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness” (CCC 397).

But where is Adam in all of this? Remember what God commanded Adam to do: guard (*shamar*) the garden. That’s his mission. Adam is to guard (*shamar*) the garden, protecting it from intruders, like a priest in the Old Testament would guard the sanctuary from any trespassers.

And this is what makes the temptation scene even more tragic. When the serpent shows up in the garden, whose responsibility was it to keep the intruder away? Adam’s. But where is Adam? Is Adam fulfilling his mission? Does he guard the garden? Was he away on business and not aware of the intruder? No. The Bible reveals that Adam is right there by Eve’s side during the temptation scene, that he goes along with the devil and eats of the tree with Eve. What a tragic failure! The one mission given to Adam in the garden was to guard it. The devil enters the garden, and he does nothing. The devil talks to his wife, tempting her, seducing her to break God’s commandment, and Adam who is right by her side does nothing. Nothing to protect her. Nothing to protect the garden. And most of all, nothing to protect his soul from being poisoned by the devil’s lies.

Suffering Hope (Genesis 3:15, 3:17-19; Luke 22:39-44; Acts 5:30; Matthew 27:29)

The fourth major point Genesis reveals about the human family is how sin separates us from God and how God has a plan to restore us to himself.

Sin has devastating consequences for the human family. Right after the fall, the Bible tells how man and woman hide from the presence of God (Genesis 3:10). How tragic: Adam and Eve are now running away from the God who lovingly brought them into existence, has a plan for their lives and wants them to be happy. This points to what sin is ultimately all about: turning away from God.

As a result of this first sin, man and woman lost what can be called “the four harmonies”: the original harmony they had *with God*, the harmony they had *with all creation*, the harmony *with each other* and the perfect harmony they experienced *within their own souls*. Without

the supernatural gift of God's life dwelling in us, the human family ever since has been wounded, plagued by an inclination to evil and selfishness, which is the result of what Christians call "original sin" (CCC 405). As St. Paul explained, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Romans 7:15). Most of all, because of the first sin, man and woman not only die physically; the greatest tragedy is that they die spiritually and, unless something dramatic happens to change their tragic situation, they will live eternally separated from God.

This is what makes the end of the story of Adam and Eve so remarkable. It would be just and reasonable if God responded to Adam and Eve's rebellion by rejecting them. But God still loved them, and he chose to show them mercy, not judgment. Right away he unveils his plan to rescue them: he foretells how the woman will have a descendent who will defeat the devil, crushing the head of the serpent and liberating the human family from his reign of sin and death (Genesis 3:15). The early Church called this passage the "protoevangelium," that is, the "first Gospel," because it points toward Christ, who will ultimately defeat the devil (CCC 401).

But God doesn't just give a prophecy in his words about the future savior. He foreshadows how that savior will redeem the world.

Just as Adam was tested in a garden, so Jesus Christ will be tested in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46). But where Adam failed his test, Jesus will prove to be faithful right where Adam was unfaithful.

Whereas Adam ate from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Jesus went to the "tree" of the cross (see Acts 5:30). And in his passion, Jesus will take on the curses of Adam. Just as Adam

was cursed with the sweat of his brow, thorns and thistles coming from the earth and ultimately facing death (Genesis 3:17-19), so Jesus takes on those curses, sweating drops like blood in the garden (Luke 22:44), wearing a crown of thorns on Good Friday (Matthew 27:29) and ultimately being killed (Luke 23:46).

Indeed, immediately after Adam and Eve's sin, God is already revealing his plan for redemption.

FOR MORE BACKGROUND: KEY CONCEPTS

Image and Likeness (CCC 356-357):

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. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity...

Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.

Original Holiness (CCC 374-375):

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.

The Church, interpreting the symbolism of biblical language in an authentic way, in the light of the New Testament and Tradition, teaches that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were constituted in an original “state of holiness and justice”. This grace of original holiness was “to share in. . .divine life”.

Original Justice (CCC 376):

By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man’s life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die. The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called “original justice”.

The Fall (CCC 397-398):

Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God’s command. This is what man’s first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness.

In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully “divinized” by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to “be like God”, but “without God, before God, and not in accordance with God”.

Effects of the Fall (CCC 399-401):

Scripture portrays the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness. They become afraid of the God of whom they have conceived a distorted image - that of a God jealous of his prerogatives.

The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul’s spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination. Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man. Because of man, creation is now subject “to its bondage to decay”. Finally, the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will “return to the ground”, for out of it he was taken. Death makes its entrance into human history...

What Revelation makes known to us is confirmed by our own experience. For when man looks into his own heart he finds that he is drawn towards what is wrong and sunk in many evils which cannot come from his good creator. Often refusing to acknowledge God as his source, man has also upset the relationship which should link him to his last end, and at the same time he has broken the right order that should reign within himself as well as between himself and other men and all creatures.

Original Sin and Concupiscence (CCC 404-405):

How did the sin of Adam become the sin of all his descendants? The whole human race is in Adam “as one body of one man”. By this “unity of the human race” all men are implicated in Adam’s sin, as all are implicated in Christ’s justice. Still, the transmission of original sin is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. But we do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, **Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state.** It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by **the transmission of a human nature deprived of original**

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

Passages: Genesis 1:26, 2:15-17, 3:1-7, 3:15; Luke 22:39-44; Acts 5:30, Matthew 27:29

Introduction

Launching Question: Who am I? What am I made for? What is the purpose of life? These are questions that humanity has been wrestling with for a long time. What are some of the best answers that you have heard to these questions?

Allow the group to discuss.

Made For Relationship

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

These are some of the most important questions we face in life. And there's one famous story in the Bible that points us in the right direction. You may have heard these passages before, perhaps even throughout your childhood, but the invitation in this Bible study is to look at these truths with new, mature eyes. Today we are going to look at the beginning of the Bible, the book of Genesis. Genesis means "beginnings." Let's begin our study by reading Genesis 1:26.

(Read Genesis 1:26)

1. What does this verse tell us about what humanity is made for? What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God?

Allow the group to discuss. Don't tell them the full answer just yet.

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

As in any piece of literature, when you come across a word or expression that you're not sure what it means, you consider the context, to see how it's used in other settings. This will be important for interpreting the Bible correctly, too. So, if we want to understand the meaning of being made in God's image and likeness, we should consider the next time the expression is used. The next time the Bible uses the phrase "image and likeness" is Genesis 5:3. Let's see how the phrase is used there.

(Read Genesis 5:3)

2. What does this verse tell us about the phrase "image and likeness"? And what does this mean for us as athletes, when the Bible says that we are created in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:26)?

Answer: Adam has a son named Seth, and Seth is in the image and likeness of his father Adam. In Scripture, therefore, the idea of image and likeness points to sonship. When Scripture states that we are created in the image and likeness of God, it is telling us that we are God's children, his sons and daughters. Unlike anything else in all creation, God made us to share in his life, to live in friendship with him as his children.

God's Plan (Genesis 2:15-17)

3. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* picks up this same idea, and describes God's great plan for us like this: "God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life" (CCC 1). What does this tell us about what we are created for? How does this build on the idea that we are created in God's image and likeness?

Answer: God did not have any need to create us – he is perfectly blessed in himself. Yet, as the Bible teaches, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and out of love, he freely chose to bring us into existence and fill us with his life, so that he could share his love with us. This is where we find enduring, lasting happiness: in friendship with God as his sons and daughters. We are God's children and he loves us. We did nothing to earn this love. It is freely given. We didn't have to exist. God, out of sheer love, freely chose to bring us into existence in order to share his love with us.

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

The account of Adam and Eve reveals the great love we are made for – but it also tragically reveals how we have rejected that love. Adam and Eve, our first parents, were created in God's image and likeness, but chose to deny what they were made for and separate themselves from God's love. Let's pick up the story in Genesis 2.

(Read Genesis 2: 15-17)

4. What two commands does God give Adam?

Answer: The first command God gives Adam in these verses is to till and keep the garden (Genesis 2:15). The original Hebrew word translated "keep" is shamar, which literally means "to guard." The word is used in the Old Testament to describe priests guarding the holy tabernacle from intruders (Numbers 1:53; 3:7-8). Adam is, therefore, being told to guard the garden like a Levitical priest would guard the sanctuary.

The second command God gives Adam is "You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

5. According to these verses, why did God give this command to avoid eating from this one tree? Is he just trying to control or restrict Adam and Eve?

Answer: Allow the group to discuss. Notice how God emphasizes the tremendous freedom he is giving Adam: "you may freely eat of every tree..." There's only one tree that God warns against because he knows that if Adam eats of it, he will be harmed: "For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17). God gave this command to Adam because he loves him and doesn't want him to be hurt.² See also Jeremiah 29:11 for reference to God's good plans for us.

² What is the meaning of this tree? And why is it so dangerous? The tree symbolizes the limits of the human person, dependent on God and his plan for our lives (CCC 396). God invited our first parents to accept their limitations and trust in Him. To reject our dependence on him and his plan for our lives would be to break our relationship with him as our Father, which is a tragedy worse than physical death. As the Catechism explains, "The 'tree of knowledge of good and evil' symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom" (CCC 396). "Man's eventual eating from this tree symbolizes his unwillingness to accept this dependence on God. Man instead uses his freedom to try to establish what is good and evil for himself apart from God. He seeks to 'be like God' but without God (CCC 398). This leads to tragic consequences for man—separation from God and the introduction of sin and division into the human family. Through the law given in Gen 2:16-17, God wants to protect man from this grave danger" (Edward Sri and Curtis Martin, *The Real Story* (Golden: Epic Publishing, 2012), 148).

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

In Sports, we have rules, referees, and out-of-bounds lines. Their purpose is not to restrict the players; rather, they are there to allow the players to freely play the game as it is supposed to be played. Pope Francis said: "Sport respects human freedom in that, within the confines of a specific set of rules, it does not prevent creativity but rather fosters it. Thus, the experience of being freely oneself is not lost."

5b. What do you think about this quote?

Allow the group to discuss

The Temptation (Genesis 3:1-7)

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

Now we come to a next major point Genesis reveals about the human family: our fall. One of the most famous passages in all of Scripture is the temptation of Adam and Eve.

(Read Genesis 3:1-7)

6. Consider the strategy of the devil in his very first words to Eve: "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any trees of the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1). Why does the devil ask *that* question? How does it contrast with God's actual command to Adam and Eve?

*Answer: Remember what God actually said in Genesis 2:16: "You may **freely** eat of **every** tree in the garden." He gave them great freedom!*

God warned them to avoid just the one tree because he knew it was harm them. But the devil wants Eve to think of God as giving this command because he is too restrictive and limiting her freedom.

7. Now let's look at Eve's response. How does Eve's response also contrast with God's actual command?

Answer: Eve replies by saying they can eat from "some" trees, but of the tree in the midst of the garden, even if they touch it, they would die (Genesis 3:2-3). But did God say that? No. She doesn't mention the broad freedom God gave them in the garden. Instead, she exaggerates the one restriction in God's law ("We can't even touch it!"). We can see that she is starting to buy in to the devil's view of God as an arbitrary law-giver who restricts our freedom.

- 7b. How does your perspective of your coach or other authority figures impact your relationship with them?

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

Next, the devil goes in for the kill. He says to Eve: "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" (Genesis 3:4).

8. When the serpent says, "You will not die," what is he claiming? Is he just making a simple clarification, or is there something more sinister in his words? And what is the devil saying about God in this passage?

Answer: Stating, "You will not die," amounts to calling God a liar. According to the serpent, the tree is not harmful after all. In fact, it's something that will make them like God. The reason God is telling

them not to eat of this tree is that he is afraid they will become like him! According to the serpent, God made up this law to keep them in the dark and under his control.

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

Notice how the devil is not trying to get Eve merely to break a rule. He's trying to get her to break a relationship. That's what the first sin is all about: questioning God's goodness and not trusting his plan. As the Catechism explains, "Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness" (CCC 397).

9. In what ways might you experience the temptation to doubt God's goodness and his plan for your life? How might you be tempted to view his plan, his teachings or his moral law as restrictive? What does this passage teach us about the temptations we face today?

Allow the group to discuss.

10. We've looked a little bit at Eve's response to the devil, but let's go back and look at Adam's response also. In Genesis 2, Adam was given the job to guard ("shamar") the garden. In this moment, is Adam doing his job? What should Adam have been doing? How is Adam also responsible for the first sin?

Answer: The Bible reveals that Adam is right there by Eve's side during the temptation scene and goes along with the devil and eats of the tree with Eve. The devil enters the garden, talks to his wife, and tempts her to break God's commandment, and Adam does nothing. Adam fails in his one mission to protect the Garden and Eve.

Suffering Hope (Genesis 3:15, 3:17-19; Luke 22:39-44; Acts 5:30; Matthew 27:29)

11. As a result of this first sin, man and woman lost what can be called "the four harmonies" — the original harmony they had (1) with God, (2) with all creation, (3) with each other, and (4) within their own souls. They become plagued by an inclination to evil and selfishness which is the result of what Christians call "original sin" (CCC 405). St. Paul describes the effects of original sin like this: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Romans 7:15). How have you experienced what St. Paul is describing in your own life?

Allow the group to discuss.

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

Adam and Eve's response to their sin is to hide from the presence of God (Genesis 3: 8-10). It would have been just if God responded to Adam and Eve's rebellion by rejecting them. But instead, he immediately unveils his plan to rescue them. Let's read the promise that God makes in Genesis 3:15.

(Read Genesis 3:15)

12. In this verse, God speaks about the conflict between the serpent and the woman and her seed. Why is this so important at this point in the story? Does this verse remind you of anything that will happen later in the Bible?

Answer: Right away God unveils his plan to rescue Adam and Eve: he foretells how the woman will have a descendent who will defeat

the devil, crushing the head of the serpent and liberating the human family from his reign of sin and death (Genesis 3:15). The early Church called this passage the “protoevangelium,” that is, the “first Gospel,” because it points to Jesus and Mary, who will defeat the devil.

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

But God doesn't only promise a savior, he also foreshadows how that savior will redeem the world. But where Adam failed his test, Jesus will prove to be faithful right where Adam was unfaithful. And in his passion, Jesus will take on the curses of Adam. Consider the following curses Adam experienced:

(Read Genesis 3:17-19)

Note to the leader: Please read aloud. Consider having three different people in your group look up and read the following passages.

Now consider what Jesus experiences in his passion:

(Read Luke 22:39-44)

(Read Acts 5:30)

(Read Matthew 27:29)

13. How does Jesus in his passion take on the curses of Adam?

Answer: Just as Adam was tested in a garden, so Jesus Christ will be tested in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46). But where Adam failed his test, Jesus will prove to be faithful right where Adam was unfaithful. Adam ate from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; Jesus went to the “tree” of the cross (see Acts 5:30). And

in his passion, Jesus will take on the curses of Adam. Just as Adam was cursed with the sweat of his brow, thorns and thistles coming from the earth and ultimately facing death, so Jesus takes on those curses, sweating drops like blood in the garden (Luke 22:44), wearing a crown of thorns on Good Friday (Matthew 27:29) and ultimately being killed (Luke 23:46).

14. Why is it important to recognize that God immediately responds to Adam and Eve's sin with a plan for redemption? What does this tell us about God? And what might it mean for our lives?

Answer: Allow the group to discuss. In particular, emphasize how this reveals God's love and mercy and His desire to provide us with a way to be free from the sins that enslave us and the fullness of God's plan in Jesus Christ. It would be just and reasonable if God responded to Adam and Eve's rebellion by rejecting them. But God still loved them, and he chose to show them mercy, not judgment. Right away he unveils his plan to rescue them.