

E.P.I.C. Cycle 1: The Adam and Eve Effect

Beginning of Meeting:

For your first meeting, please follow this as a guide:

- Welcome everyone and open in prayer
- Explain what First Priority is (a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend)
- Start with a quick icebreaker (idea: ask everyone to say their favorite movie as a child)
- Ask everyone to download the First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app
- Assign someone to report weekly attendance on the First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app
- Assign someone to send meeting reminders to the group (REMIND or GROUPME)
- Start this week's lesson
- Close the meeting in prayer

Topic:

The purpose of this cycle is to understand how Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God has caused eternal separation between God and all people, and how this is impacting us today.

Memory Verse: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." **John 3:16-17**

EQUIP- Week 1

Genesis is the first chapter of the Bible, and it recounts how God created everything, including the first people- Adam and Eve. When God created Adam and Eve, they did not know about evil, but then they decided to go against God's clear instructions and warning. This week, we will talk about how and why they made this decision.

1. In **Genesis 1:26a,27,28,3**, we read: Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. "

Questions:

- A. In the first verse above, why does God refer to Himself in the plural (us)?
- B. After God created Adam and Eve (the first humans), what did He do?
- C. How did God feel about His creation and why does this matter?

2. In **Genesis 2:8, 9b,15-17**, we read: Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. In the middle of the garden were the *tree of life* and the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are

free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

Questions:

- A. What are the names of the two trees that God planted in the garden?
- B. What was the man's (Adam) job in the garden?
- C. Which tree was Adam commanded by God not to eat? What would happen if he did?

3. In **Genesis 3:1-5** we read: Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman (Eve), "Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?" "We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden," the woman answered, "except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die. "The snake replied, "That's not true; you will not die. God said that because he knows that when you eat it, you will be like God and know what is good and what is bad."

Questions:

- A. What did the snake say to Eve about and why is this important?
- B. What was Eve's reply to the snake's question? Was her answer in line with God's warning?
- C. What did the snake say in return? Why is this important?

4. In **Genesis 3:6-10** we read: The woman could see that the tree was beautiful, and the fruit looked so good to eat. She also liked the idea that it would make her wise. So she took some of the fruit from the tree and ate it. Her husband was there with her, so she gave him some of the fruit, and he ate it. Then it was as if their eyes opened, and they saw things differently. They saw that they were naked. So they got some fig leaves, sewed them together, and wore them for clothes.

During the cool part of the day, the LORD God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden. The LORD God called to the man and said, "Where are you? "The man said, "I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid."

Questions:

- A. Why did Eve want to eat the fruit, even though God warned her not to?
- B. Why did Adam and Eve hide when they heard God calling to them?
- C. How is the story of Adam and Eve related to us today and how does this week's lesson EQUIP us to trust God more?

Personal reflection: Take time alone today to reflect on these verses; consider God's blessing and warnings to Adam and Eve; and then ask God to show you how this story is related to you and your life (this is considered prayer time).

PREPARE- Week 2

Please follow these steps for the meeting:

- Welcome everyone and open in prayer
- Explain what First Priority is (a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend)
- Start with a quick icebreaker
- Start this week's lesson
- Close the meeting in prayer
- Report attendance on the First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app

- Last week, we talked about how God created Adam and Eve in His image, blessed them, and then commanded them not to eat from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* or they would die. But Eve believed the snake's lie and ate the fruit and so did her husband. This week, we will talk about how Adam and Eve responded after they defied God's command.

1. In **Genesis 3:11-13** says: "And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Questions:

- A. Who did Adam blame and who did Eve blame?
- B. How should Adam and Eve have responded instead?
- C. How do shame, pride, and fear often cause us to blame others too?

2. In **Genesis 3:21-23** we read: The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken."

Question:

- A. What were the consequences for Adam and Eve (and all of humanity) after eating from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*?
- B. Why did God say that they could not be allowed to eat from the *tree of life*? How was this an act of God's mercy?

3. In **Acts 3:19** we read: "Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away." **Isaiah 59:2a** reads: But your iniquities have separated you from your God your sins have hidden his face from you and **John 3:16** reads: For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

Question:

- A. Why is turning to God necessary if we want to be reconnected to Him?
- B. At this time of your life, are you following God and His plan or your own selfish desires?
- C. How does John 3:16 encourage you today?

Personal reflection: Take time alone today to reflect on these verses; consider how God provided for Adam and Eve even though they disobeyed Him; consider areas where you need to repent and turn towards God; ask God to help you with this.

4. PREPARE for next week's meeting by following this checklist:

- Ask a student leader to share his/her testimony next week
- Ask a student leader to read the invitation next week
- Ask two students to print and bring the response cards and pens for next week
- Invite your friends to attend the meeting next week

INVITE- Week 3

This week, a student will share a faith story and another will share the invitation. Please follow these steps at the beginning of the meeting:

- Welcome everyone and open in prayer
- Explain what First Priority is (a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend)
- The student shares their faith story
- The student reads the invitation
- Hand out the Student Response Cards (found on the FP website)
- Close meeting in prayer
- Report attendance & decisions on First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app

Invitation/Prayer (read out loud):

And now we will pray. This is not a magical prayer. It is simply an opportunity to respond to the gospel message which is this: Jesus is God's son and he died on the cross as payment for our sins. He then rose from the dead three days later, proving that God accepted Jesus' death as payment.

(Please ask students to bow their heads and close their eyes)

If this message is speaking to you today, and you want to trust in Jesus as your savior then pray this simple prayer to yourself:

Dear Lord, I am sorry for the ways that I have sinned against you. I pray that you will come into my life and help me to trust in you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Follow-up Plan: Once you have shared the gospel and invitation, collect the Student Response Cards (can be downloaded from the First Priority website) and then follow these steps:

Student leaders commit to praying for and contacting any student who has decided to follow Christ and/or has questions.

1. When contacting these students, student leaders will want to:
 - Answer any questions
 - Offer to pray for them
 - Invite them to the next week's CONNECT Week meeting
 - Invite them to your church
2. Return all Student Response cards to a student leader or teacher sponsor (Response cards or information on the cards must never be given to an outside adult or organization/ church)

CONNECT- Week 4

In this cycle, we have talked about how Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and this resulted in death for all of humanity. Fortunately, though, God has provided us a way back to Him. This week, we will talk about this way back.

Please follow these steps at the beginning of the meeting:

- Welcome everyone and open in prayer
- Explain what First Priority is (a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend)

- Start this week's lesson
- Close meeting in prayer
- Report attendance & decisions on First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app

1. **Romans 5:12,15b,18** reads: "Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death has spread to the whole human race because everyone has sinned. It is true that many people died because of the sin of that one man. But God's grace is much greater, and so is his free gift to so many people through the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. So then, as the one sin condemned all people, in the same way the one righteous act sets all people free and gives them life. And just as all people were made sinners as the result of the disobedience of one man [Adam], in the same way they will all be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man [Jesus]."

Activity:

1. Spend time talking about the verses above. Here is another way to think about Adam's sin and Jesus' salvation:

1 sin + 1 man = death

1 death + 1 man = forgiveness

Death = physical and spiritual separation from God

Salvation = saving us from eternal separation from God

Adam's sin of disobeying God equaled physical and spiritual separation from God and death; When Jesus, the son of God, died for our sins it equaled eternal forgiveness and a reconnection to God for those who believe in Jesus as their Savior.

2. Spend the remainder of the meeting talking about how to **CONNECT** with God by placing your trust and faith in Jesus (suggestions: prayer, Bible, youth group, etc.).

Read the Challenge to the group: Invite a friend to your church or youth group this week.

Bonus Content for EPIC Cycle 1:

Bible Project on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOUV7mWDI34>

Why the story of Adam and Eve matters: <https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/adam-and-eve-really-existed-and-why-that-matters>

August 2023