

# WEEK 1 - Longing & Hope - Why This Story?

## Fall Focus 2024 // Canopy Guide

### The Big Story

#### CONVERSATION STARTERS

*Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.*

- What was your favorite story as a kid? What captivated you about it?
- Do you have a favorite Bible story? Share why it's your favorite if you feel like it.

#### VIDEO INTRO | STUDY GUIDE

Stories are central to who we are. Whether our stories are ones told around a campfire, or passed down from generation to generation, stories are woven into the fabric of our culture and our lives.

So what story are we a part of? The story of Creation, Fall, and Redemption that Scripture makes clear to us is all rooted in Jesus Christ, without whom there would be no story at all.

To spend all of our energy on one part of the story is to miss the fullness of what God is up to. For example, if we put all our focus on the Fall, we'll miss how we were made to live with God, and to partner with him in his work in creation, and that through Jesus, this dream is recaptured. Though we were separated, our longing for a home is transformed into our hope. Through Jesus, we are reunited into partnership and loving friendship.

The Ecclesiastes passage we read in the video says that what is broken cannot be made straight, which could leave us feeling hopeless, and left to itself, it is. But, as Paul tells us in Romans 8, there's another part to the story. Paul says that all of creation is groaning, longing to be free of the corruption to which it has been subjected. Creation will not be free from its bondage until we finally and fully experience our complete adoption into God's own family through Jesus.

We will spend the next few weeks exploring and considering significant topics around

this, the Big Story of how the world, and we, got to where we are today - and where we go from here. This story is one that Scripture refers to in many places as a mystery. The mystery is this: How will God rescue humanity and creation from sin and death? Will our longing and creation's groaning end? Is there hope for the kind of life God desires to live with creation?

### **Scripture to Read**

- Ecclesiastes 1:1-14
- Romans 8:18-25

### **Scripture to Memorize**

- Romans 8:18, 8:25

### **Deeper Discussion Questions**

1. In light of this conversation, take some time to talk together about what place hope and longing claim in our lives and in our Christian community.
2. What does it mean to live in a world that was created by God and called "good," yet also is a creation that groans (Romans 8)?
3. If you claim the story of Scripture as the foundation of how you interact with and view the world around you, why have you personally claimed this Big Story?
4. Early Jewish tradition was based on oral storytelling. Are we different today?

## **PRAYER**

Ask the Lord to enable us to see a fuller view of his work and love in this story and how we might join him in his work in each moment of the day. Pray that those who have no hope in this world would be enabled to see the hope that they can have in Jesus. Make sure to spend some time as a group each week to pray specifically for each other.

## **EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH**

1. [The Story of the Bible](#) - Bible Project Video, ~5 minute simplified summary of the metanarrative/Big Story of the Bible.
2. [The Importance of Reading the Bible as One Big Story – Grayson Pope](#) - blog post that gives a short, but helpful viewpoint on reading the Bible as a united story about God with a word of caution on pulling things out of context and over allegorizing the text.