2026 Q4 L01

Discussion Leader Notes

Lesson 1: The Creator Speaks

We were created for face-to-face communion with our Maker, but sin shattered that intimate connection. Yet God refused to abandon us; instead, He initiated a rescue plan, using prophets and ultimately His Son to restore the broken lines of communication.

Opening Poll: What is the hardest part about listening for God's voice today?

A. Too many digital distractions.
B. Guilt or shame keeping me away.
C. Not knowing how to distinguish His voice.
D. Feeling like He is silent.
E. I don't struggle; I hear Him clearly.

Opening Engagement Story: Digital technology allows us to see loved ones far away, but nothing replaces the joy of a face-to-face hug. God created us for that kind of direct, in-person relationship. When sin broke that connection, He didn't just hang up the phone; He began a long process of seeking us out to restore that face-to-face communion.

Day 1 Sabbath Afternoon: The Creator Speaks

God is not just a Creator; He is a communicator who desires a relationship with us.

Poll: If God were to speak to you directly today, what would be your first reaction?

A. Utter terror
B. Overwhelming joy
C. Skepticism (is this real?)
D. Deep unworthiness
E. Immediate curiosity

Opening Illustration: We often think of the Bible as a history book, but it is really a record of God passionately trying to get a message to His lost children.

Set the Scene: Let's look at the memory text for this week, which contrasts how God spoke in the past with how He speaks now.

Read the Text: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- God initiated the communication.
- He used "various times" and "various ways."
- The prophets were His messengers in the past.
- His ultimate message was delivered by His Son.

Guided Discussion

- Why do you think God chose to use "various ways" rather than just one method? (Allow discussion)
- How does knowing that God is an active communicator change how you view your relationship with Him? (Invite multiple responses)
- What does it mean that Jesus is the final and greatest message from God? (Ask follow-up)
- How can we better tune in to the ways God is speaking to us today? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight: Even when fallen human beings could no longer commune face-to-face with God, He ingeniously provided the gift of prophecy to bridge the gap. His ultimate goal is to restore the shattered image of God in us.

Christ Connection: While prophets delivered God's words, Jesus is the Word made flesh, the ultimate revelation of the Father. Jesus is the exact translation of God's heart.

Life Response: Spend five minutes in total silence tomorrow morning, asking God to speak to your heart before you look at your phone or talk to anyone else.

Encouragement Bridge: God is actively reaching out to you right now. Open your heart to the Creator who never stops speaking to His children.

Day 2 Sunday: Communication in Eden

Humanity was originally designed for face-to-face communion with God in a perfect environment.

Poll: What aspect of Eden's perfection appeals to you the most?

A. No pain or sickness
B. Perfect relationships with others
C. Face-to-face conversations with God
D. Meaningful, untiring work
E. Complete harmony with nature

Opening Illustration: Imagine having a conversation where nothing is misunderstood, no one is defensive, and pure love flows freely. That was the daily reality for Adam and Eve.

Set the Scene: God created a beautiful world, and humanity was His crowning act, uniquely made to reflect His image and interact with Him.

Read the Text: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" (Genesis 1:27-28, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- Humans are uniquely created in God's image.
- God's first interaction with humanity was to bless them.
- He immediately spoke to them, giving them purpose and dominion.

Guided Discussion

- What does being created "in the image of God" tell us about our capacity for relationship? (Allow discussion)
- God blessed Adam and Eve before giving them a job to do. Why is that order important? (Ask follow-up)
- How did the Sabbath serve as a special time for communication in Eden? (Invite multiple responses)
- How can we experience a taste of that Edenic communion today? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight: As intelligent beings, Adam and Eve enjoyed open communion with their Maker, meeting with Him daily in the cool of the day. They were created as social beings to experience a holistic relationship with God and each other.

Christ Connection: Jesus came to restore what was lost in Eden. Through Him, we are being recreated into the image of God so that we can one day enjoy that perfect, unhindered fellowship again.

Life Response: Intentionally set aside a specific time today to walk in nature and talk to God, remembering the garden where it all began.

Encouragement Bridge: The God who walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day desires to walk with you through every moment of your life today.

Day 3 Monday: Hiding From God

Sin causes us to feel shame and instinctually hide from the God who loves us.

Poll: When you mess up, what is your most common reaction?

A. Hide and isolate myself
B. Blame someone or something else
C. Try to fix it immediately using my own power
D. Beat myself up emotionally
E. Confess and ask for help

Opening Illustration: Like a child hiding behind a curtain with chocolate on their face, we often try to hide our sins from the all-seeing God, thinking we can escape His notice.

Set the Scene: Adam and Eve had the freedom of choice, which is essential for true love. Tragically, they believed the serpent's lies and disobeyed, resulting in immediate shame.

Read the Text: "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden." (Genesis 3:7-8, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- Their eyes were opened, but they only saw their nakedness and shame.
- They tried to cover themselves with their own works (fig leaves).
- The familiar sound of God walking, which once brought joy, now brought fear.
- They attempted to hide from the omnipresent God.

Guided Discussion

- Why does sin inevitably lead to shame and a desire to hide? (Allow discussion)
- What are some "fig leaves" we use today to cover our spiritual nakedness? (Ask follow-up)
- How did Satan's promise that their eyes would be opened turn out to be a deceptive half-truth? (Invite multiple responses)
- When we feel the urge to hide from God, what should we do instead? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight: Satan hid the consequences of disobedience, but after the Fall, Adam and Eve realized God's garment of light was gone. Sin makes us feel guilty, and in our guilt, our first impulse is to flee from God's presence.

Christ Connection: Jesus was stripped naked on the cross, bearing our shame, so that we could be clothed in His perfect robe of righteousness, never having to hide from God again.

Life Response: Identify one area of your life you are trying to hide from God, and bring it to Him in honest, open confession today.

Encouragement Bridge: God sees past your fig leaves and your hiding places. He approaches not to condemn, but to heal and restore.

Day 4 Tuesday: God Seeks Humanity

Even when we run away in sin, God immediately takes the initiative to seek and rescue us.

Poll: What is the most comforting aspect of the parable of the Prodigal Son?

A. The father letting him choose his own path.
B. The son coming to his senses.
C. The father running to meet him.
D. The complete restoration of his status (robe, ring).
E. The celebration and joy over his return.

Opening Illustration: A search and rescue team doesn't wait for the lost hiker to find their way back to base camp; they go into the dangerous wilderness to find them. That is exactly what God did for us.

Set the Scene: God knew exactly where Adam and Eve were, but His question, "Where are you?", was an invitation to relationship and repentance. We see this same seeking heart in Jesus' parables.

Read the Text: "Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'" (Genesis 3:9, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- God took the initiative to call out.
- God addressed Adam personally.
- He asked a question to draw Adam out, rather than issuing an immediate condemnation.

Guided Discussion

- Why did God ask "Where are you?" when He already knew the answer? (Allow discussion)
- How does the father's reaction in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) parallel God's reaction in Genesis 3? (Ask follow-up)
- Notice Adam and Eve's blame-shifting in the verses that follow (Genesis 3:12-13). How do we exhibit this same behavior today? (Invite multiple responses)
- How does it change your perspective to know that God is always the initiator in our salvation? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight: God's immediate concern after the Fall was to meet with His children and give them hope in their despair. He goes to great lengths to reestablish communion with us, demonstrating His unconditional love.

Christ Connection: Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's search mission. He came to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), running toward us with compassion when we were dead in our trespasses.

Life Response: Think of someone who has wandered away from faith. Reach out to them this week with a message of unconditional love, reflecting God's seeking heart.

Encouragement Bridge: No matter how far you have strayed or how deep you have hidden, the Father is calling your name and running to welcome you home.

Day 5 Wednesday: Expelled From the Garden

Sin brought painful consequences and separation, but God provided a promise of ultimate victory.

Poll: When dealing with the consequences of a bad decision, what helps you cope the most?

A. Support from friends and family.
B. Knowing that God forgives me.
C. Focusing on how to fix the problem.
D. Remembering God's promises for the future.
E. Time to process my feelings.

Opening Illustration: When a doctor performs a painful surgery, it isn't to punish the patient, but to save their life. The expulsion from Eden was painful, but it prevented humanity from immortalizing sin.

Set the Scene: The devastating result of sin was a separation from face-to-face communion with God and an expulsion from the perfect environment of Eden. Yet, God gave them the first gospel promise.

Read the Text: "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- God speaks this judgment directly to the serpent.
- He promises a fierce conflict ("enmity") between the serpent and the woman's Seed.
- The Seed will suffer a temporary wound ("bruise His heel").
- The serpent will suffer a fatal blow ("bruise your head").

Guided Discussion

- Why is Genesis 3:15 often called the "first gospel promise"? (Allow discussion)
- How did God's provision of animal skin tunics for Adam and Eve point forward to the gospel? (Ask follow-up)
- How did sin change our communication with God, as seen in Israel's terror at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19)? (Invite multiple responses)
- How do you hold onto hope when you are facing the painful consequences of your own mistakes? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight: Although humanity lost direct, face-to-face communication with God, they left Eden with a rescue plan already in place. The promise of a coming Redeemer gave them hope that the sin problem would eventually be solved.

Christ Connection: Jesus is the promised "Seed" of the woman who took the strike to His heel at Calvary in order to crush the head of Satan and secure our eternal salvation.

Life Response: Write down Genesis 3:15 and place it somewhere visible as a reminder that God has already secured the final victory over the evil you face.

Encouragement Bridge: Even in the middle of your deepest regrets, God is working out a beautiful plan of redemption for your life.

Day 6 Thursday: God's Spokespeople

Because face-to-face communion was lost, God graciously communicated through prophets, culminating in the revelation of His Son.

Poll: Which method of divine communication do you find most fascinating?

A. Direct audible voice
B. Prophetic dreams and visions
C. The intricacies of nature
D. The written Word of Scripture
E. The life and actions of Jesus

Opening Illustration: If you are separated from someone you love by an ocean, you don't stay silent; you write letters, send messages, and make calls. God used every available channel to reach us across the gulf of sin.

Set the Scene: God refused to abandon a fallen world to silence. He raised up spokespersons to bridge the gap and deliver His life-saving messages.

Read the Text: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- God actively pursued communication in the past ("time past").
- He used human intermediaries ("the prophets").
- The culmination of His communication is in the present era ("these last days").
- His ultimate spokesperson is "His Son."

Guided Discussion

- Why did God need to use prophets instead of just speaking to everyone directly? (Allow discussion)
- How does the Bible serve as a reliable revelation of God's character today? (Ask follow-up)
- Why is Jesus considered the greatest and most effective revelation of God? (Invite multiple responses)
- In what ways is the Holy Spirit continuing to guide and speak to the church today? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight: Prophets are individuals chosen by God as His spokespersons to remind humanity that He has not forgotten them. While nature reveals God's power, the Bible reveals His purpose, and Jesus reveals His very heart.

Christ Connection: Jesus is the exact image of the Father. He came to earth so that we could finally see the face of God again in a way we could understand and endure.

Life Response: Read one chapter from the Gospels today, specifically looking for what Jesus' actions teach you about the Father's personality.

Encouragement Bridge: The God of the universe has not left you in the dark. He has spoken clearly through His Word, and most beautifully through His Son, to lead you safely home.

Day 7 Summary

From Eden to eternity, God is a relentless communicator who is actively seeking to restore a face-to-face relationship with His children.

Poll: What is your biggest takeaway from this week's study?

A. God's original design was intimate, face-to-face communion.
B. Sin makes me want to hide, but God always seeks me out.
C. God provided the promise of a Savior immediately after the Fall.
D. The prophetic gift was given because God loves us too much to stay silent.
E. Jesus is the ultimate and perfect message from God.

5 Weekly Takeaways

- Humanity was originally designed to enjoy daily, direct communion with the Creator in a perfect environment.
- Sin broke that connection, introducing shame, fear, and a desire to hide from God.
- God took the immediate initiative to seek out fallen humanity, asking, "Where are you?" on a mission of rescue, not just condemnation.
- Although humans faced the painful consequences of expulsion from Eden, God gave the first promise of the gospel—the Seed who would crush the serpent.
- God bridged the communication gap by speaking through prophets, culminating in the arrival of Jesus Christ, the ultimate revelation of His love.

Final Reflection Question: How will you respond today to the voice of the Creator who is calling your name? (Pause for responses.)

Closing Appeal: We serve a God who refuses to let us go. He spoke the world into existence, He spoke promises of hope in the darkness of Eden, and He is speaking to your heart right now. Don't hide behind the trees of shame or the fig leaves of self-reliance. Step out into the light of His grace. Listen to His Word, trust in His Son, and let His Spirit restore the image of God in you.

Closing Prayer: Father in Heaven, thank You for never giving up on us. Thank You for seeking us out when we were lost and hiding in our sin. Thank You for the prophets who faithfully delivered Your messages, and most of all, for Jesus, the living Word. Help us to hear Your voice clearly this week and to respond with open, obedient hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen.