



## 2022 Bible Classes

### Priority Questions

#### Why are we here?

To help each camper see and experience God (Job 42:5) while creating a physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually safe space.

#### How do we accomplish this?

**SAFETY.** Everyone (parents, volunteers, counselors, and campers) has to feel mentally, physically, and emotionally safe in order for the spiritual self to be realized. Set an environment of respect; deal with bullies of all kinds, and create a culture of love. Our motto: *"Besides your home, the safest place on the planet."*

**DIVERSITY.** Celebrate differences. Whether you are an athlete, scholar, musician, or domino expert, your color, talents, interests, and quirks are accepted and celebrated...each tremendously adds to the cultural tapestry; then the words of Desmond Tutu come alive, *"Isn't it amazing that we are all made in God's image, and yet there is so much diversity among his people."*

**FOOD.** The food needs to be good. People—especially kids—will remember the food one way or another...and talk about it!

**FUN.** Everyone needs to have FUN! If it is not fun, no one will want to come back. The cooks, nurses, campers, counselors all need to have a great time. Allow camp to host a wide age range, like 9-18 for summer camp. You will be amazed at the results and live the words of Dr. Seuss, *'Today was good. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one.'*

**INVESTMENT.** Pour all the resources you have into making a perennial culture...one that allows for generations to experience. If you give half your resources, you will get 50% of the results. If you only focus on one year, you may forego the next decade.

**LEADERSHIP.** The rules need to be clear and few with someone who is in charge to enforce them. They must be enforced or everything will spin out of control and no one will have much fun.

**RESPECT.** Everyone from the directors to the volunteers to the campers to the head dishwasher has to feel valued; each has the right to feel like SOMEBODY. The culture of the camp is to make everyone feel like they are important.

**ROLES.** Everyone needs to know their role, being defined and understood by all parties; if so, then each person will know if he is fulfilling it or not. Each can feel the success of fulfilling it and personal accountability if not.

**SPIRITUALITY.** Have a spiritual camp not a RELIGIOUS camp. There is a huge difference between the two. Trust God

to work on the young hearts that are open. If great sermons and convicting preachers always converted people, all of our kids would be disciples. Trust the process and the Spirit.

**YHVH.** God, Jehovah, has to be made REAL. We need to forget trying to indoctrinate kids into the church; let God REVEAL HIMSELF through the stars, the people, the Bible, nature, relationships, and through the spiritual culture that is created; the rest will follow.

## **Summer Theme: LOVE RETHINKED**

*"Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always "me first," doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end." - Paul*

*"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." - Lao Tzu*

*"But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them." - John (1 John 2:5)*

*"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that." - Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*“For this is the message you heard from the beginning: we should love one another.” – John (1 John 3:11)*

*“Some people don’t understand the promises they’re making when they make them,” I said. “Right, of course. But you keep the promise anyway. That’s what love is. Love is keeping the promise anyway.” – John Green, The Fault in Our Stars*

## **Bible Classes**

Have you ever picked up a glass that has sat for a while and most of the ice has melted expecting a sip of your favorite drink only to be disgusted by a watered-down-gross-what-is-that-taste-in-my-mouth feeling? That is what we have done to love: we “love” a movie; we “love” pizza; “love those nails, girl!”; “man, I love this game.” And so on and so on, so much so that we have lost the essence of love as God defines it. Check out: the divorce rate or how emotionally based we are in our communication of love or how non-committal, insecure and fragile we are in our relationships. All, and more, results from a fractured and diluted understanding of love, which, I believe, stems from the increasing gap in our knowledge of and relationship with our Creator and His Word. No longer. This summer we are going to rethink love. Each week will be a journey of discovery into the process of reexamining biblically-defined love as we learn to approach the scriptures with a Hebrew mindset; as we grow more familiar with the first eleven chapters of Genesis—God’s self-introduction to his people and

the preface to his love story to the world; and as we link these learnings to Paul's famous description of the "Way of Love" in 1 Corinthians 13. Our goal is to better understand God, for He *is* love, and to improve our comprehension and appreciation of the consistent and timeless message found in the Torah and its daily influence on our hearts and minds. I invite you to join the journey and let us become people of the text rethinking the meaning, and therefore, the purpose of love in our lives, and, inevitably, our world.

When you prepare to teach, keep the following two questions in mind:

1. Does the content of my lesson and the passion infused in my teaching have a natural tendency to cause a camper to become a full-time student of the Word?
2. Would a camper, who believes my message, be interested in following Jesus as a natural "next step?"

Have a great time preparing and teaching the lesson you choose; thanks for your willingness to do so. Much love, Jeff

### **Some Helpful Hints:**

1. Scriptures in [brackets] are to be read out loud to campers.
2. Text and scriptures in { } are for reference and context.
3. Questions, led by 'Q)', are to be asked out loud to campers.
4. Questions with no 'Q)' are rhetorical and food for thought.
5. Be prepared to have the end in mind when teaching: What is the overall message this lesson is trying to get across to the campers? What can I put in their pocket that they can retrieve later as needed or wanted?

6. Questions are meant to keep things moving and get the campers engaged; use them and keep answers on target.
7. Don't be afraid to use the "pregnant pause" or a few moments of silence to generate engagement as well.
8. **HAVE FUN!**

### **Sunday Opening Devotional – #newwayofthinking (11+)**

Q). Would someone descriptively define love as we see it in today's world?

Q). On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is not at all and 10 is exactly, how would you say today's definition matches God's definition?

Q). How do you know?

In 1 Corinthians Paul has been addressing and teaching many issues to the church about life and doctrine; everything from divisions and quarrels, sexual immorality, lawsuits, marriage & singlehood, freedom in Christ, order in worship, the Lord's supper, and the use of Spiritual Gifts but in 1 Corinthians 12:31b he says "now, after all that, let me show you something far better, the most excellent way," and goes on to pen one of the most famous and widely used writings about love. This week, we are going to explore this most excellent way and come to a deeper understanding of what God meant by exploring Genesis 1-11. The theme this summer is "*LOVE RETHINKED.*" In order to get the most out of this week's Bible classes you will need to learn to think differently. {Show Think Differently Video:

<https://youtu.be/keCwRdbwNQY>} So let's begin our journey into the land of the "rethought."

Bible is written to an Hebraic (Eastern) audience. As Greek (Western) influenced thinkers, we must reorient ourselves in order to more deeply grasp biblical meanings. This devotional is an introduction to this new perspective and is foundational for the discoveries throughout the this week's Bible Classes.

- Bible full of images not data
- Must learn to think and process like a Hebrew
- Imagine looking at a room through a window for 20 years; then looking at that room through a new window; what would you see? We are going to change windows this week.
- Imagine listening to a song played on the piano only using the left hand. Would you recognize the tune? Or hearing only the right hand: you may recognize the tune but would it be as rich with both hands? Now imagine listening to both hands playing: how much richer and fuller is the song. Such is the way of this type of thinking as applied to the scriptures. Listening to the right hand is like reading the bible at its surface (super cool and is okay!). Adding the left hand is like finding deeper meaning to the scriptures and enhancing what you already know (i.e. the melody).

### **Greek (Western) vs. Hebrew (Eastern) Thinking:**

#### In regards to Words

- Greek (G): truth & definitions in prose, outlines, bullet points.
- Hebrew (H): truth & definitions in imagery, poetry, pictures and stories.

### Numbers

- G: Represents quantity =>  $5 + 2 = 7$
- H: Represents quality & symbols => Pentateuch (5) + Tablets (2) = Creation (7)

### Eternal Life

- G: Eternal life is separate or after life; a destination to attain as a reward.
- H: Eternal life is present now, in this world as a quality of life; living in harmony with God. About a kind of life not a linear life.

### Community vs. Individuality

- G: About me.
- H: About us.

### Error & Sin

- G: Wrong belief or incorrect thinking, based on knowledge and misuse of it.
- H: Wrong behavior; based on what a person does.

### God

Existence of:

- G: Must prove it.
- H: Assumes the existence of God.

Description of:

- G: What or who is God; abstract thinking.
- H: Nature of relationship; experience of God.

Faith in:



- G: Intellectual, creeds, doctrine, proof texts.
- H: Relational, shared experiences with God.

### Truth

- G: Rational & Scientific. How was it done? Belief comes through validation. Static and unchanging, relative, absolute.
- H: Religious & Experiential. What was done and who did it? Focus is on story. Belief comes through experience. Dynamic and unfolding, it's rooted but as time moves forward, we learn more & more.

Q). Why is all this important in relation to our theme?

This week you are invited to join a journey of discovery as you learn to see the Bible in a new way and by doing so hopefully you will begin to “rethink” what you know about love and, subsequently, the impact this has on your life and how you internalize any lesson you receive from God’s Word. The message is both profound and simple and will unfold with each passing Bible class. Let’s learn about the most excellent way and “rethink” love. {From this point, give an overview of what campers can expect from the Bible classes and devotionals.}

## **Monday – You are Loved! (9-10)**

Activity 1: Split into teams. Have each team pile all their shoes some distance away, then one by one each team member races to the pile, finds their shoes, puts them on, then runs back to

start and tags the next person to go.

Activity 2: See if campers can find someone to switch one shoe with and wear that shoe for the remaining of the class.

[Luke 15:11-32]

Jesus gives us this story to help us catch a glimpse of God.

Q). What kind of father do you think this guy is? {Push for a deeper answer than “a good one;” perhaps some of the same qualities as they reported earlier?}

Q). What did the father do to prove his love? He accepted the son back without an apology or an explanation for his actions. The father’s love was given freely.

Q). What do we call that kind of love? Unconditional

Q). What did the son do to deserve the father’s love? Nada!

Q). What are some examples from your life that would help me understand this kind of love?

Q). What are some examples that show how God loves you unconditionally?

Q). Which would encourage you more: conditional or unconditional love? Why?

There is story about a Chinese artist, a new Christian who wanted to paint the parable of the prodigal son. In his first attempt, he painted the father standing at the gate with his arms folded looking sternly down the road at his son coming. Another Christian explained to him that this was not the picture of our heavenly Father. “But most fathers are that way,” said the artist.

He was told that Jesus was trying to show what God was like with an unconditional love to those who come to Him. He repainted the picture and this time the father was running toward the son with his robes flapping in the wind, a look of joy on his face, and wearing two different kinds of shoes. When asked why? The artist simply replied that the father was so excited about reaching his son he grabbed the shoes nearest to him and ran, for he did not care if the shoes matched or not. All that mattered was that his son was now home.

God is only interested in loving you...this is what the Bible calls grace. Grace does not change with your response and it does not care if the world misunderstands it...its sole purpose is to offer you unconditional love in the hopes that you will offer your love in return. God's love is not earned by what we do; he loves us regardless. We behave and obey him because of this great love...a love that doesn't care which shoe is worn. {don't forget to switch the shoes back.}

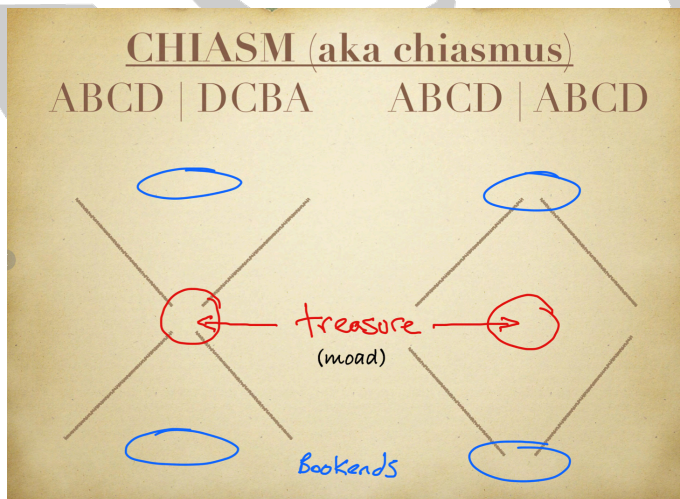
### **Monday — #iAMloved (11+)**

Q). Tell what you know about Genesis Chapter 1?

Reminder to think like an Easterner (Hebrew) when approaching Bible: not about data & knowledge but about images and story; full of patterns and very often there is deeper

meaning buried like treasure in the text.

Quick lesson about a Jewish literary style often used in the Bible called a Chiasm: it is a writing structure, which expresses a series of ideas and then repeats them in an opposite or parallel order. {See diagram below. Also, use the laminated page for visual reference.} Rabbis and Jewish authors would place a deep meaning or Scriptural treasure, called a moad (moh-ahd) at the center of this pattern. NOTE: a chiasm and moad is often easier to detect when written in Hebrew not English.



Back to Genesis Chapter 1...

Q). Who is the target audience? Jews.

Q). Describe their situation. Enslaved for 400+ years and now are free and encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai.

Q). What would you think and feel if this were you? {put yourself in their place and describe thoughts, feelings, patterns of thinking, insecurities, spiritual health}

Q). How did an Egyptian value a Jewish life? Was based on production: Make bricks, you are valuable to me; don't make bricks, I have no use for you. Value determined by what they do not who they are.

[Genesis 1] Read it all.

Can anyone see the chiasm? Hint: look at the size of the paragraphs describing each day of creation.

Enter Chiasm (size = text = content)	Exit Chiasm (size = text = content)
A = 1:3-5 = A	C = 1:14-19 = A
B = 1:6-8 = B	B = 1:20-23 = B
C = 1:9-13 = C	A = 1:24-25 = C

Actually, two chiasms at once. (amazing authorship!)

Moad = sacred times in verse 14

Q). Can anyone guess what sacred time does Genesis 1 highlight? {Let them guess; at this point, don't indicate if right or wrong. Will come back to this.}

Q). What major event unbalances the chiasm? The creation of man in verses 26-30; this interruption is important to Hebrew audience because it tells the reader that man's creation is

significant. The Hebrew word for *image* is the same word also used for *idol*. It's interesting that the first thing we learn about ourselves is that we are made in God's image, and later on in the 10 commandments, He commands us not to make anything else in his image (an idol). As humans, we bear the image of God, but what is the purpose of this for us—what is the purpose for God? Creating images of gods was a fairly familiar concept in the ancient world, but representing the image of God, not through a statue or idol but through your very being, has profound significance.

Q). As we read Genesis 1, what other interesting pattern did you notice relevant to the days of creation? There was evening and there was morning.

Q). What stands out to you regarding this pattern? Evening is mentioned first, then morning.

Q). Why would this be worth mentioning?

Q). How do we (Greeks/Westerners) start the day? In the morning with work. However, notice that to a Jew the day starts with rest—this is an important fact the author wants people to know regarding what major focus God wanted to communicate to his people via Genesis 1.

Q). How did God describe all that he made after the sixth day? {Gen 1:31} Very good.

Q). And then God did what? Rested on the seventh day.

Q). What is different about the description of this day compared to the other six? No evening or morning. This signifies to the Jewish reader that this day is eternal. This day, called the Sabbath, is a day of rest and no work and is set aside as a weekly reminder from God.

Q). If the moad points to a sacred day, and the Jewish day begins with rest, and God rested on the seventh day becoming

the Sabbath—a weekly, sacred day, then why do you think God is making such a big deal out of rest?

God rested on the seventh day because there was nothing more he needed to do creation; it is very good and can stand on its own toward the future. The seventh day has no evening or morning and invites reader to join the Sabbath and enjoy it. I am enjoying the creation! God says I also feel the same way about you as I do the creation. You are the crowning moment in all that I created and your value is not based on what you do (i.e. making bricks) but on who you are. I love you and I bid you to Trust the Story.

Jesus said in Mark 2:24 to the Pharisees, the ones who are to know all of this about Genesis, “the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” God wants his people to know that their identity lies in who they are not in what they produce and invites them to enter his rest. He reminds them that though there faith, hope and love held out for his people; the greatest of these is love {1 Corinthians 13:13}. **THIS CONCEPT SHAPES ALL REMAINING SCRIPTURES!**

Rethink love, God’s love, and its role in your life: How does this lesson and this concept relate to you? What will change this week as love is “rethought?”

### **Monday\*\* - #nolovenome – Boys / Girls Devo**

Counselors answer the question: What would I be without

love?

## **Tuesday – Self-Control (9-10)**

### Game: "Ask but Don't Tell"

Break into groups. Each group get into circle. One person starts by asking the person to their right a question within 3 seconds using eye contact only. Person being asked can't answer the question, can't repeat a question, can't laugh or react in any way for 5 seconds...or you're out! That person now turns to right and has 3 seconds to ask a question using only eye contact and so on until one person remains. This game is about having self-control.

Q). What is key to succeeding in this game? Self-Control

Boys Class: [Proverbs 16:32]

Girls Class: [Proverbs 25:28]

Q). What does this scripture mean? What does it mean to be self-controlled?

Q. What are some foolish things a person who lacks self-control might do?

{Use the following list. If one is said turn to the scripture and look at what the Bible has to say about it.}

- Talk too much - Prov. 10:8
- Talk about people - Prov. 10:18
- Embarrass our families - Prov. 11:29
- Snap back - Prov. 12:16



- Don't seek advice - Prov. 12:15
- Hotheaded & reckless - Prov. 14:16
- Doesn't want to learn - Prov. 15:14
- Mouths off - Prov. 18:2
- Perverse mouth - Prov. 19:1
- Fights, quarrels - Prov. 20:3
- All-that, Prov. 26:12
- Picks fights; gives a hard time - Prov. 27:3
- Arrogant, conceited - Prov. 28:26
- Angry at parent's - Prov. 29:11
- Answers w/out thinking - Prov. 29:20

Bottom line:

- A godly character is one of self-control.
- You are responsible for your own actions.
- Cannot control what other people do and they cannot control you.
- You are the final decision maker not your parents, nor your friends or your enemies...Only you can control you. Practice self-control in order to get a godly character.

**Tuesday – #sayenough (11+)**

Q). Give me the main point of yesterday's Bible class. {Might be good to reflect on the previous lesson so you can get the gist.}

Read [Genesis 2:4-3:24]

Q). What are some obvious problems in this story?

- Talking snake?! Nakedness?!

Let's talk about snake:

It's a wild animal; yet, oddly human: talks, walks (God curses him to crawl on his belly in Gen. 3:14), logical (makes a fairly decent argument), quite relatable. {Interesting: ever wonder if the craftiness of the snake was to be as relatable as possible. Fun Fact: the Hebrew word for crafty is one letter different from the word naked. Hmmm...is something trying to say the snake is very relatable and all the more tempting?}

Q). What was the real temptation the snake gives the woman?

- V. 3:1. When Greeks (Westerners) read this verse, the emphasis is typically on the tree: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from *any tree* in the garden'?"
- However, in Hebrew the emphasis is on say: "Did God really *say*, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
- So real temptation is not about the tree but about what God said. It's as if snake is saying God would not have put that tree there if he didn't want you to enjoy it; put you in the Garden if he didn't want you to enjoy everything in it. Why the boundary? {Every wondered how the story would have progressed if Adam or his wife had said, "Hey, snake, that's a great question; let's go ask God."? Hmmm...}

Q). Speaking of the tree, how did the woman describe it? How was this different from the way God described the tree?

- Woman: In v. 3:6, "good for food, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom"

- God: In v. 2:9, “good for food and pleasing to the eye”
- What is different? Desire has been added. Hold that thought.

Let’s visit creation of woman. Now, Adam was alone and needed a suitable helper. So God brought to the man (man in Hebrew = Ish) all the animals he made to be named and search for a helper. No suitable helper was found so created woman (woman in Hebrew = Isha) from man.

- Phrase “bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh” denotes equality.
- Eve’s first name was woman. (This is significant later in the week and why the name Eve has not been used thus far.)
- Both were made in the image of God. But what does this really mean?

The name for God here is El Shaddai, which Greeks (Westerners) translate, God Almighty. In the Hebrew, it is a series of phrases which mean “the God who knows when it is enough.” This is a reference to Day 6 of creation in Genesis 1: *“God saw all he had made and it was very good.”* Then he rested. It is enough. God is one of great self-control and knows when to stop.

So let’s combine all this to get to the point of this part of the story: You are made in the image of God and not an animal. Beasts always follow their desires; humans, being like God, have knowledge and ability to limit their desires. God gave the

man and woman everything they need; they just have to Trust the Story and stay in his rest. God will watch over them. It's not about human will power but about trusting God.

We now have some light on the first problem, the snake; now, let's talk about the other problem in the story: why all the nakedness?!

Q). Once they ate the fruit, what did Adam and his wife do? They hid.

Q). How did God respond? Asked, *"Where are you?"*

Q). How do you think he sounded when he said this: mad, frustrated, frantic, confused? There are two words for 'where' in Hebrew: one denotes an item lost, like losing your keys: *"Where are my keys?"*; the other denotes expectation as in *"I always put my keys in this spot, now where are they?"* This last one is the word God uses: he expects us to be near him. He says, *"I made this spot for you; now you are not here, what happened?"*

Q). What was Adam's response? *"I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

Q). What was God's response? *"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I command you not to eat from?"*

Q). What do these questions communicate about God's concern? He is more concerned about what voices they were listening to than their nakedness. God is like, hey, you were naked before you ate the fruit and are still naked...that is not the point. You are listening to other voices besides mine and this led you to disobedience; in other words, you are not

trusting the story, not trusting me. You are listening to other voices, which spark your desires and then you become more like the beast not knowing when to say enough and this leads to sin. Read [James 1:14].

Read [1 Corinthians 13:6]. *“Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth.”*

Q). What does the lesson in this story have to do with this verse in Corinthians?

- Evil is the result of not knowing when to say enough. Sin is the behavior of not obeying God and truth and is the result of not saying enough, but saying I want more. I want what I want no matter what.

Then what is love for God? Is it not obedience, which comes from trusting God and his story and truth for our lives, remaining in the place God created for us and not listening to the voice of desire; knowing when to say it is enough.

John explains this in [1 John 2:5]; let's read it.

We must rethink and redefine love: it is not just an awareness of God, nor just an emotionally-bonded attraction to God; it is obedience because obedience denotes trust.

Let us be people who do not fall for a “snake’s” temptations, or even our own, but let us remain close to God and his rest and Trust the Story. Rethink love and rejoice in truth; find what God says and rejoice.

## Wednesday – Love One Another (9-10)

### Game: “Eat to Beat”

Have a two tables set up each with a bowl of cereal (no milk) or crushed Oreos. Get two people for each table. They are to grab a spoon in one hand. The team of two that can eat the most in one minute wins. Catch: the spoon is attached to a three foot broomstick so person must grab the stick at the opposite end of the spoon. {Hint: to win takes feeding each other} Play one more time, if the first teams don’t get this.

Q). What was the secret to winning this game? Must serve the other person. Serving others is loving them.

Q). What are other ways we can show love to another person?

Q). What can we do in our hearts to show love to another person?

### **Forgive Others.**

[1 Corinthians 13:5d] “...it keeps no record of wrongs.”

Q). What does this phrase mean?

Q). Why would someone keep a record of wrongs?

Q). How is this harmful?

### **Accept One Another.**

[1 Corinthians 13:4]

Q). What is envy?

Q). How can it harm a friendship?

Q). What does it look like to accept another person? Not trying

to change them for your own purposes or wants; being patient and kind even when they don't meet your expectations and do what you want them to.

### **Honor One Another.**

[1 Corinthians 13:5]

Q). What are ways we can dishonor our siblings or closest friends?

Q). How can we show honor to others?

Q). What type of thinking does it take to honor others? Respect them and see them as valuable; see them as God does.

If we do these three things: Forgive, Accept, Honor, we will go a long way in loving others. {I guess you can say we will have gone “fah.” **Forgive. Accept. Honor.** Sorry, bad dad joke. : \ }

### **Wednesday – #loveoneanother (11+)**

Q). Give me the main point of yesterday's Bible class. {Might be good to reflect on the previous lesson so you can get the gist.}

Q). What are some of the most volatile relationships we can have? With our siblings or closest, closest friends.

Q). How many of you have a relationship like this at times?

Q). How do you find yourself behaving towards this person?

Today we are going to see what God wants us to learn from Cain & Abel and how it affects such relationships.

Read [Genesis 4:1-12].

Q). Does anyone know what your name means? Have them share. Remember we are trying to learn to think like a Hebrew and thus gather more meaning from the text. Names were a big deal in Eastern/Hebraic cultural. People would live out their names in a positive or negative fashion.

Q). What does Cain's name mean? Acquired.

Q). Does that seem like a strange name? Why?

Q). What does 'acquired' mean and imply? It is transactional in nature; to acquire something involves getting that something from someone else. Now Eve named him because she received "help of from the Lord." So, if Cain were to live out his name in a positive manner, he too would always remember that everything he gets comes from God, but if he lived it out in a negative manner, he would grow fearful and see his life based on his own production—"I've got to acquire it myself." (a reminder to the Hebrew reader of how the Egyptians valued his/her life) and this leads to comparisons and judgments and volatility in the relationship.

Q). Why do you think Cain & Abel brought offerings to God? Did God tell them to?

Q). At this point in time, had God set out any expectations to his people that offerings were required or what kind of offerings were expected? No.

Q). What is odd about God looking with favor on Abel's offering but not on Cain's since there were no standards communicated? I mean what dad would look at one young son's art work and say, "Oh, wow son. Awesome! Let's put in



on the fridge.” And then to the other son, say “Eh, not so good. Try again.”, as he throws his work in the garbage. No! He would encourage both and hang them both on the fridge. So why did God do this? Perhaps to see if Cain would positively live up to his name. Is God above testing you to see your heart? No. {Reference Exodus 20:20}

Q). How did God respond to Cain? He said, *“Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”*

Q). What might this remind the Hebrew reader of? You are not a beast. Remember, you were made in my image and I made a place for you. Trust the Story. Trust my Rest. Be like me and know when it is enough. I love you not matter what. Your value is not based on what you do but who you are. Remember your place next to me. All sound familiar from Monday and Tuesdays lessons?

Q). What does this teach you? God’s focus: that we do what is right. God’s position to humanity has never changed; it is always our position that changes; our choice to do what is right. Adam & Eve were banished from Eden not separated from God. We do the separating by our choice to trust God or not and thus doing the right thing or not. Obedience conveys trust; trust conveys love; obedience conveys love.

Q). So how did Cain respond to this “reminder?” He killed his brother. He sinned, disobeyed, didn’t do the right thing. Sin is not about who you are; it is about what you do—your behavior. God tells Cain, through his name, remember I am your helper; you can be everything I made you to be and more.

Q). Why would he take this action? He forgot his name and the fact that God loves him just the same as Abel. He let fear take control and this led to insecure comparisons and mistrust; then his desire to acquire things himself took over; this is the theme of Genesis: rest (trust) vs. mistrust.

Q). How do you see this play out in your relationships with either your sibling or a close friend? (Hopefully, there is no murder in the room, but I bet you've wanted to...that alone should wake you up to the beast inside. Yikes!)

Q). So, if Cain had taken God's input and trusted him and lived up to his name, how might this story have ended?

Read [1 Corinthians 13:4]. *"Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud."*

What test is God putting in your path to bring out the fear and insecurities inside you revealing the position of your trust in Him? Perhaps the relationship you find so frustrating and challenging is not about your sibling and how they treat you but about you and your ability to recognize the sin crouching at your door; it desires to have you, you must rule over it! Rethink love and be patient, be kind, don't compare or get insecure (proud). God loves you. Find his rest as you love one another.

### **Thursday – The Cross – 9-12-year old**

Share the story of the cross adding your impressions of various key moments and their impact on you. You are a teacher not a preacher. Inspiration is the goal. Keep in mind the two preparation questions on page 5. Talk about the depth of love

it must take to sacrifice one's son for another.

### **Thursday – #thecovenant – 13+**

Going to look at the cross via the story of Noah and the Flood in Genesis 6:1-9:17; not going to read it all as we know enough of the details for our purposes today.

Q). How do you think the flood story relates to the cross?

Q). What is state of mankind and earth just before the flood? [Genesis 6:5, 11, 17] Wow, very radical and intense! Seems evil has spread and even got organized and now God is going to destroy it all. You might be thinking: "Ha, I knew it. God isn't really all-loving. Here comes the mean, angry guy. Just as I suspected all that rest stuff is just too good to be true."

Q). Why is this story relative to a Hebrew reader? Flood stories are very common among most cultural histories and are epic folktales that a Hebrew would be used to hearing. For example, Epoch of Gilgamesh: story about a hero who meets the gods, gods get angry, hero tries to save world by building a raft and fills with animals; popular in Mesopotamian or Chaldean, which is where who was asked to moved there by God? Yes, Abraham to city of Ur. This narrative tells of a very different God than all the gods of the day to which people were accustomed.

This story parallels Days 1-6 of the Creation Story and contains a chiasm as defined by the numbers 7-7-40-150 // 150-40-7-7;

center of which is verse 8:1. Read [Genesis 8:1].

Q). What do you think is significant about God remembering Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock? Why would this be the treasure in this story? Did he forget them or get busy and forget to put something in his calendar or set an alarm?!? That's the point of the story; let's see it unfold...

Let's talk about an Eastern or Hebraic covenant:

- Always required two parties:
  - 1) Suzerain – powerful party, set the terms
  - 2) Vassal – less powerful, accepted terms, is safe if the Suzerain's terms are obeyed
    - Provided a sign so that anytime the covenant is challenged, it can be provided to show there was an agreement; like a wedding ring.
    - If no sign, then vassal is likely to be destroyed for breaking the covenant.

Therefore, verse 8:1 is treasure because God acts not only as the Suzerain but as the vassal and remembers the covenant. Though he is the powerful party, he comes to Noah and partners to save the world. Compare 6:6, where He regretted making man, to verse 8:21, where He vows to stop destruction, *even though* man's heart is still the same. God wants to save the world and show his love unlike all the gods at that time, who were angry and destroyed. God lives up to his name and knows when it is enough. He sealed this agreement, acting as the vassal, with a sign.

Q). What was the sign God used? The rainbow, of course, but in Hebrew the word is just bow as in bow and arrow.

Let's read [Genesis 9:8-17] about this account and learn some interesting information as a Hebrew would see things.

Q). Anything stick out? Said 'covenant' enough, hey?! Seems God got a bit senile and kept repeating himself with a couple of words. In fact, in the Hebrew, 'covenant' is mentioned 7 times, 'earth' is mentioned 7 times, 'clouds' 5 times, and 'bow' 3 times. There is a mini chiasm going on here and when the center is determined, the treasure is verse 9:16: *"Whenever the bow appears in the cloud, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and living creatures of every kind on the earth."*

Q). What is a bow used for? Weapon to kill or maim.

Q). Which way is the bow pointing? Heavenward.

Q). What could this be foretelling? The cross and the covenant.

The Almighty Suzerain, the one powerful enough to end life, not only lives up to his name and knows when to say enough (stop destroying), but he provides the sign that points to an everlasting agreement of salvation and protection.

He even took the part of the vassal and was destroyed on our behalf when we couldn't provide enough to act as a covenant sign. Jesus was beaten and tortured on your behalf. This was determined long ago. [1 Corinthians 13:5] describes this kind

of love, God's love for us: *"It does not dishonor others. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrong."* God says I have the sign, paid the price and once again I invite you to my rest, to Trust the Story and see how I long for you. I honor you. I came seeking you. I am gentle with you. I remember you but I remember your sins—your disobedience and mistrust—no more.

Q). Spend some time reflecting on the magnificently crafted message of this story; it's not just a Sunday-School-Kingdom-Kid story. Oh, no, it's so much more! It is a story about your creator remembering you and using creation, his name, his invitation, and his message of rest to communicate his incredible love for you. How will you respond to such a message: increased faith, a radical change, worshipful gratitude, a thirst to understand more? Decide today how you will respond and then join us for lunch.

### **Friday – The Language of Love (9-10)**

**Play Art Relay:** have the kids sit in a straight line so that they are facing the back of the person in front of them. Show the person in the back of the line (the one who has no one looking at his back) a simple picture (i.e. a square or smiley face). He is to draw the picture on the person's back in front him, who in turn draws it on the person's back in front of them and so on and so on. This continues until the drawing reaches the first person in line (the one with no one on whose back to draw).

That person draws the shape on a piece of paper. See how close they come to the original.

Q). Who speaks more than one language? Which ones?

Q). How many languages are spoken around the world? 6,500

Q). Why do you think there are so many languages in the world?

Today we are going to read a story in the Bible which helps us understand why. Read [Genesis 10:32-11:9]

Q). What did the people want to do? Build a city with a tower.

Q). Why? To make a name for themselves.

Q). Was there anything wrong with building a new city with its big tower? No, but God's concern is for our heart and why we do things. Are we loving him and others or are we loving ourselves before him and others? They wanted to serve themselves not God.

Q). What then did the Lord God do? Came down and confused their language.

Q). Was this a punishment or a curse? No. Just an act...and infinitely wise act as God knew that people were going to make this name for themselves and forget him and when we forget God that's when we get into trouble. He knew it would be best for us to suddenly not be able to communicate as easily with each other.

Q). What do you think speaking other languages teaches us? It makes us learn about each other and have to build relationships in order to get to know each other. God knew that not speaking a language would force us to get to know

each other and work together by learning to speak the language of love to communicate to each other and appreciate each other's differences. Many think it is different languages that led to different cultures and ways of life. It always takes love to learn about and build a friendship with someone that is different than us.

[1 Corinthians 13:1]

Q). What does this verse mean? If I can speak all 6,500 languages of the world, but am not able to love people, then the Bible—God—says I am just a loud mouth; a person making a bunch of noise. Isn't a resounding gong or clanging cymbal annoying?

Q). What kinds of behaviors does it take to love someone different than you? Patience, kindness, serving acts, respect, honesty, compassion, gifts, hugs, eye contact, time together, listening, etc.

Seems our world is getting meaner and more apart, let's bring kindness and friendship back into our world by speaking the language of love.

## **Friday - #lovecontinuously (11+)**

Q). Who can sum up the main points of each Bible class this week?

- Sun – *Think Like a Hebrew.*
- Mon – *God's Rest is Created for Man.* Creation: Man is



pinnacle of creation, God rested on unending 7<sup>th</sup> day; God invites us to this rest.

- Tue – *Trust Me Though You Are Naked, I Will Give You All You Need.* The Fall: we are not beasts but made in the image of God, whose name means “know when to say it is enough,” do not listen to any voices other than God’s; You are valued for who you are, not what you do; God invites us to stay near him in the place he created for us.
- Wed – *You Can Be Everything I Made You To Be, Just Trust and Obey.* Cain & Abel: Reminder via Cain’s name (acquired) that we don’t need to live in fear or insecurity which breed sin but remain trusting and obedient to God and our relationships will benefit. God invites us to Trust his love for us and his ability to care for us.
- Thu – *God Remembers Me.* Noah and the Flood: God once again lives up to his name and knows when to stop—stop destroying and acts as the vassal creating an everlasting sign, the bow in the clouds, which points to heaven foreshadowing the cross. God will always remember us and he invites us to trust this no matter what.

Q). What happened to Noah after the flood receded?

Read [Genesis 9:18-28].

Q). What problems do you see in story? Noah curses Ham’s son Canaan.

Q). Why would Noah curse Canaan, Ham's son? Why not curse Ham?

Q). What were Noah's options besides a curse?

Did you know? The word used for "cursed" in verse 9:25 is the only instance in the Bible where a human used this word; this word is reserved for God alone. So Noah had a chance to Trust God and know when it was time to say enough—basically forgive, but he didn't; instead, he decided to call down this stupid curse, which has affected a line of people ever since. This is the first introduction to forgiveness, which is the ultimate form of trust.

Q). How does forgiveness convey trust?

Read [1 Corinthians 13:5b, 7].

Q). How does the lesson relate to Paul's description of a love that is continuous and keeps no record of wrongs?

Q). Why would this be pertinent for humans? Typically, we men are quick to respond in anger with curses and react foolishly, or we women are quick to respond with meanness and gossip. You are going to have situations which push your buttons and make you angry; you will want with every fiber of your being to lash out and react especially when you are humiliated or disrespected. This lesson invites us not to lash out in our shame and insecurity but just know when to say enough and trust God. God invites us to remember the message of the Genesis story thus far: that we, like we learned on Monday, are the crowning glory of his creation and he is our rest; that we, like we learned on Tuesday, are not wild animals who live by

uncontrollable desire but we are made in his image with the power to say it's enough; that with God we, like we learned on Wednesday, have all that we need and so don't need to act on the sin that crouches at our door as did Cain; that we too, like we learned yesterday, are forgiven so we can forgive. Lashing out in shame and hurt never works out—hurt people, hurt people! Showing love always works out because it tells God we trust him and He, indeed, can always work things out.

### **Friday Night Closing Devotional – #loveneverfails (11+)**

Wow, we have learned a lot this week about love, God's love, Genesis and God's first message to his people. It turns out that Genesis 1-11 is God's preface to the narrative of the Bible and his message to us.

Q). What is the purpose of a preface to a book? It's the authors way of introducing you to his story or to a context and background in order for the reader to understand the author's message or intent. Genesis 12-50 is the introduction to God's message and Exodus through Revelation is the narrative.

Tonight we are going to cover the last event in God's preface and then we will sum up what the entire preface teaches about the main thrust of God's message to us.

Read [Genesis 10:32-11:9].

There are a few problems in this story: 1) What is wrong with one language? 2) Why are they worried about being scattered over the face of the earth?

Remember learning about a chiasm this week? It's a tool the author uses to help us find a deeper meaning. So in this passage, verse 11:4b (*"scattered over the face of the whole earth"*) is the treasure. {Easier to find this when written in Hebrew as it based on the fact that the Hebrew language has no vowels and there is a chiasm of consonants N B L H // H L B N.} All the stories in Genesis parallel each other. This story parallels the account of Cain and Abel. If you remember Cain was trying to "acquire" his own status and goodness and this led him to distrust. People here are trying to do the same. God does not want his people to settle until they come back to him. Is God really threatened by men's abilities? No, he knows we are not ready to say it is enough—always seeking to meet our desires and want more—so he scatters us.

This story is also about the advancement of technology. First time bricks had been made (v. 11:3). God is not against technology; his is concerned as to why we use it. It wasn't until they said, *"Then they said,"* that God intervened. In Hebrew writing, this phrase means there is a break in the continuous flow of an idea; a change in thinking or direction or motive. God got concerned not at the making of bricks but at that fact we were doing so to make a name for ourselves. Isn't our name, place, to be found in God. This can apply to the internet: good technology, how are you using it? Perhaps that is why God is

getting involved in your life in a way that seems confusing.  
Hmmm...

Babel => to confuse. God does not punish or curse or condemn;  
he just takes a proactive and wise act on our behalf. God knows  
that differing languages will help us to grow in his image.

Q). How do different languages help us grow in his image?

Makes us learn how to work together, helps us control our  
desires, forces us to take alternative steps to building a  
relationship...encourages us to love.

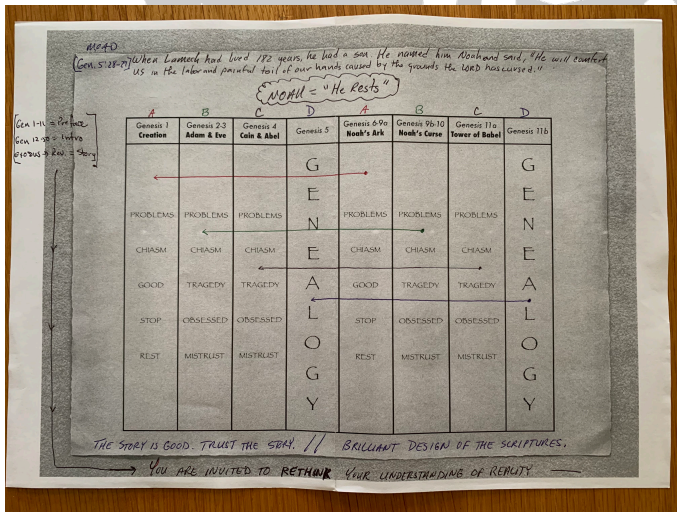
[1 Corinthians 13:1]

Q). What does this verse mean? If I can speak all 6,500  
languages of the world, but am not able to love people, then  
the Bible—God—says I am just a loud mouth; a person making  
a bunch of noise. Isn't a resounding gong or clanging cymbal  
annoying? Many think it was varying languages, which led to  
different cultures and ways of life. Let's learn to see that it was  
God in his infinite wisdom who made the different cultures so  
we would learn the language of love and its true meaning.

Now, how do we pull all of what we have learned together into  
one amazing concept so that we can learn God's message. The  
following picture summarizes Genesis 1-11. {Put this diagram  
on big poster board or projector.}

## Summary:

- Look how the 11 chapters, shown in columns, creates a chiasm indicated as A B C D // A B C D.
- The treasure is Genesis 5:28-29, written at top with the center of that verse being Noah's name.
- Noah in Hebrew => "HE RESTS."
- God's story is good; it is about the God who is unlike any other god, not needing to be served by man, but ready to serve and love man and offer man rest from his desires, which lead to selfishness, chaos and evil.
- God invites us to Trust the Story and be found in his rest: the place where he expects us and will take care of us and always show us love.
- It's a story which defines love as it depicts God's nature.



- It's a story displaying the brilliant design of Scripture.
- Paul said in [1 Corinthians 13:13] that love is the greatest; it is so because Love *is* God and He, through the scriptures, invites us to “rethink” what we know about love and God himself.
- The Preface, Genesis 1-11, invites you to see the world and the Bible's message in a whole new frame.

I hope this week has allowed you to look through a new window and to hear the left *and* right hand of a piano. God loves you and He wants you to understand His definition of love. We can continue to love our movies, our shoes, our nails and our games, but if that is all we do, then we are to be pitied among all of God's creatures, for, we were made to trust, to obey, to protect, to serve, and to care—in essence—to love.