

Week 2

The Thread

WEEK 2 - DEVOTION 1

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." – John 1:1-3

This week is your second chance at learning a memory verse on the first day of your week of devotions. The cool thing is that this week's verse builds off last week's verse.

Last week you learned John 1:1. This week you'll have the chance to add John 1:2-3 to it. These three verses form a powerful reminder of Jesus as both the messenger of God's love, and the embodiment of the message itself.

If you've never attempted to memorize a verse, there are a lot of ways to do it. One of the most effective is the 5 – 5 – 5 method. Try it and see if it works for you.

- **FIRST**, read the verses five times. On the last couple of times, read it slowly and out loud, if possible. Focus on the words.
- **NEXT**, write the verses five times. Some people find it helpful to say the words out loud as you write them. On the last few times, see if you can write the verses without looking at them.
- **FINALLY**, see if you can say the verses out loud five times without looking at your Bible or the page you've written the verses on. (Even if it takes more than five times, stick with it until you can.)

Knowing God's Word is a powerful tool in your relationship with Him. Give this a try today.

The Thread

WEEK 2 - DEVOTION 2

"So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation." – Genesis 2:3

Would you say that your life is characterized by a lot of downtime? Do you often find yourself with nothing to do? Do you constantly wonder what to do with all the free time you have? If you're like most teenagers, this does not describe you. Most teenagers are over-committed, stressed out, and worn out. School, sports, family, friends, church, maybe even a job . . . All that you are committed to takes a big toll on your life.

Take a moment and read Genesis 2:3. It's a short verse. Simple, actually. But it communicates so much. First, it signifies that God was done with creating the world. He had acted powerfully to craft all things as He saw fit. He was done. Second, out of reverence for the work He had done, God made the day holy. That means it was special. Different. Set apart. What made it different? That's the third point. It was different because it was a day of rest. God didn't make anything. He stopped creating. A day where no work was done honored the previous days of vigorous work.

By making the seventh day different, God honored the idea of rest. He made rest something to be valued. Do you need rest in your life? Do you ever make time to just stop? God made you in His image, remember? That means you need rest, too. What can you do this week to carve out moments of peace? How can you use those moments to reflect on God and on the many blessings He's given you? Don't overlook it. It's important. What will you do to make this change?

The Thread

WEEK 2 - DEVOTION 3

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" – Genesis 3:1

Is there anything worse than being lied to? Few things hurt as badly as finding out someone has twisted the truth. Especially if it's someone you know. When you find out, you go through a range of emotions. You feel angry. You feel embarrassed. You feel sad. You feel dumb. And maybe you feel angry all over again. Lies can destroy relationships, sometimes permanently.

Read Genesis 3:1-5. This passage represents the beginning of the end of the perfect harmony that existed in the Garden of Eden. God had made Adam and Eve, and gave them everything they needed to live a perfect, happy life. The only thing they were not allowed to do was eat from this one specific tree, the tree of the "knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17). That's it. And yet, what we see here is the serpent, who represents Satan, twisting God's words. He is planting the seed of doubt in Eve's mind. And he's doing so by lying. He knew what God had actually said. He was laying a trap to try and get Eve to go against God. And it ultimately worked.

In John 8:44, Satan is called the father of lies. He still lies to us today. That voice that tells you you're not good enough? It's a lie. That voice that says you're not pretty enough? Lie. That no one cares about you? Lie. That you're all alone? Lie. That you have to give in in order to fit in? Lie. The world is full of lies. And they all stand to come in between God and you. Never forget how much God loves you, how badly He wants to know you, and that you're a vital part of His plan to bring peace to the world. Pray to God today and ask Him to remind you how much He cares for you. And stop listening to the lies.

The Thread

WEEK 2 - DEVOTION 4

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. – Genesis 3:6

You've got to think that if they could take it back, they would have. If they could have seen what their sin would cause, they wouldn't have bitten the fruit. Think about it: that one sin gave birth to death, and war, and disease, and poverty, and so on . . . All because Adam and Eve couldn't follow one little rule. If they knew what we know, no way they would have eaten the fruit.

Here's the truth: even if Adam and Eve didn't eat that particular fruit at that particular moment, chances are they would have sinned some other way. Why? Because Adam and Eve were human beings, just like us. And Adam and Eve had free will to make decisions for themselves. You have to think that if Adam and Eve were capable of sin that one time, they would have eventually sinned some other way. There's no way around it.

We have the same sin nature as Adam and Eve. Our hearts are bent toward sin. No matter how good we are at our best, there is darkness in our hearts. That's why it's so amazingly amazing that God loves us as He does. He loves us so much He made a way to bridge the separation sin causes between Him and His children. He sent His perfect, holy Son, Jesus, to die as a sacrifice for our sins. If we believe in Him, His sacrifice is counted for us. From that moment on, God sees us as forgiven and sinless.

Adam and Eve planted the seeds of sin in all people's hearts. But Jesus provides us a way to be free from the penalty of sin.

Something To Think About . . .

- How aware are you of your sin? Do you feel convicted when you have sinned against God? Or has it just become a part of your life?
- When was the last time you confessed your sins to God and thanked Him for His forgiveness? It wouldn't be a bad idea to stop and do that now.

The Thread

WEEK 2 - DEVOTION 5

"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." – Genesis 3:8

Here's a slightly uncomfortable question: How do you act when you've gotten caught doing something you know you shouldn't? You act guilty, right? You may get defensive, or embarrassed. But guilt is at the heart of your response. Guilt is a complex emotion. It's a feeling based on unmet expectations, isn't it? It comes from knowing you were supposed to do one thing (the right thing), but you instead did something else (the wrong thing).

Read Genesis 3:8-12. This is a heartbreaking development. Up to this point in the creation narrative, the environment in which God and Adam and Eve interacted had been so pure. Then sin entered the equation. Look at the results: Adam and Eve, the jewel of God's creation, were shamefully hiding from God, their creator! This is a vivid example of the barrier that sin created between God and people. When faced with a perfect God, Adam and Eve's sin sent them scurrying for a hiding place.

We know what shame and guilt feel like. We've all experienced it. The most beautiful thing about God's plan is that He sent Jesus to take away the shame and guilt of our sin once and for all. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. When we are saved through faith, the guilt of our sin is wiped away. Because of Christ, and only because of Christ, we can relate to God without the separation sin causes. We don't ever have to hide.

Something To Think About . . .

- It's OK to feel guilty for letting God down. But that guilt should never be something that creates a wall between you and God. If you're having trouble accepting the forgiveness that God offers through Jesus, go to God in prayer. Ask Him to help you feel the freedom that comes with His grace and mercy.