

7-SESSION BIBLE STUDY FOR TEEN GIRLS



CAROLINE
SAUNDERS

VIDEO
ACCESS
INCLUDED

COME HOME

FOR TEEN GIRLS



GOD'S INVITATION
TO BELONG
AND BE LOVED



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COME HOME

FOR TEEN GIRLS

*CAROLINE
SAUNDERS*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Saunders is a writer, Bible teacher, pastor's wife, and mother of three who believes in taking Jesus seriously and being un-serious about nearly everything else. She loves to serve at her church (it's not just the donuts), and every year, she retells the Bible's big story at a women's retreat that she and her friends offer local women through their parachurch ministry, Story & Soul. She's had the joy

of publishing two Bible studies for teen girls (*Good News: How to Know the Gospel and Live It* and *Better Than Life: How to Study the Bible and Like It*), two picture books for kids ages 4-8 (*The Story of Water* and *The Story of Home*), and two retellings of selected books of the Bible for elementary readers (*Sound the Alarm* and *Remarkable*). Find her writing, resources, and ridiculousness at WriterCaroline.com and on Instagram [@writercaroline](https://www.instagram.com/writercaroline). (And finally, let it be known that Caroline's kids said, "Mom can make a joke out of anything," and so she ran and added that to her bio.)

DEDICATION

To the women of Story & Soul (especially my teammates and sisters Christin and Megan):

I wonder if you know how you have been home to me when I felt like I had nowhere to go? How I have tearfully praised God to watch as each December, the faces looking back at me grow to look more like family? Seeking God's Word on your behalf has been one of the greatest joys of my life. Thank you for enjoying His story with me. May this serve you.

WELCOME

In fall 2019, I committed to studying the theme of “home” in Scripture the following year. Of course, 2020 was, in many ways, all about home: we were trapped in our homes; we were separated from those who felt like home to us; and we became increasingly aware that this home didn’t feel as safe as it once did. As disturbed as I was about the world, I marveled over all there was to uncover about home on the pages of the Bible. It starts with a perfect home and its tragic demise, contains story after story of people who aren’t home yet, and offers God’s promise to bring His children home. The more I studied, the more it became clear to me that “home” stretches far beyond a theological concept—it’s deeply personal. I began to catch the scent of heavenly homesickness on every person I encountered.

Our lives have different shapes, and yet the longing for home takes up space in our hearts in a way that’s both universal and seemingly impossible to describe. We all have our own ways to deal with this, like striving to make our current homes perfect or reaching back for old memories and happier times, hoping they hold the key to home.

But the Christ follower doesn’t have to look around or look back to find home—she gets to look ahead. I wrote this study to root you in the truest story, to show you the Way (Jesus), and to help you walk by faith. After all, God has promised to bring His children home, and God always keeps His promises.

Caroline

HOW *to use this study*

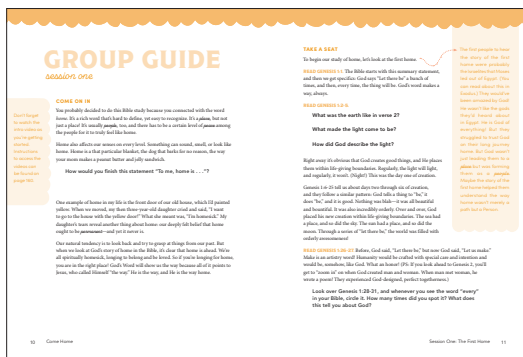
WELCOME!

We're so glad you've chosen to do this study! *Come Home* is a seven-session study in which Caroline Saunders follows the theme of home through the Bible. From humanity's first home to our eternal one, we'll see God drawing near to abide with us. We'll find that even the best aspects of home here are just a glimmer of what God is building for us through Christ. This study will affirm that our longing for home is good and purposeful, pointing us to our truest home which is found in Him.

GETTING STARTED

Because we believe discipleship happens best in community, we encourage you to do this study together in a group setting. Or, if you're doing this alone, consider enlisting a friend or two to go through it at the same time. This will give you friends to pray and connect with over coffee or through text so you can chat about what you're learning.

Here's a look at what you can expect to find in this study.



GROUP GUIDE

Each session begins with a Group Guide that allows you to begin your week together taking notes and asking questions to help you internalize and apply what you've read. If you're doing this alone, maybe ask a friend or your mom to do this part alongside you! We've included a mom and daughter guide on page 142 to help you get started.

DAY ONE

THE GOOD HOME MAKER

To see where the home is God has already provided for us and wonders to see us write both verses below.

DAY ONE OF CREATION (GEN. 1:3-2) INTRODUCES US TO A FATHER WHO SAYS, GOD SETS, GOD SHOWS

- God said, "Let there be light," and then, BINGO! there was light.
- He also set the glowing boundary—measuring the light (vs.13-14), and measured the light (vs.16-17).
- God named His goodness. God called the light good, and saw it was so.

This says sets, shows where light has been days two through six of creation.

Read Genesis 1:6-25, and keep an eye out for the eye, sets, shows phrases. Then, tick two of the steps listed, and answer the questions below.

Day 1: Genesis 1:6-8
Day 2: Genesis 1:9-13
Day 3: Genesis 1:14-19

Day 4: Genesis 1:20-23
Day 5: Genesis 1:24-31
Day 6: Genesis 1:31

WHAT DID GOD SAY?
 What boundary did God set?
 How did God show the goodness?

WHAT DID GOD SAY?
 What boundary did God set?
 How did God show the goodness?

When you've finished studying Genesis 1:1-31, check this box: I think I'm ready for this! (If you're not ready, that's okay! You can always go back to this box when you're ready.)

CONFIDENT I have the freedom to think of God as a generous, loving parent who is delighted when we love him all the time and love all the people, God, grace, love, or life. I always love him, but I always struggle. It's ok if I can't be sure to love him in the way I ought to be loving.

Do you relate to this in any way? Explain.

THE GREAT TIP:
 If you're not ready to think of God as a generous, loving parent who is delighted when we love him all the time and love all the people, God, grace, love, or life, that's ok! You can always go back to this box when you're ready.

THE GREAT TIP:
 If you're not ready to think of God as a generous, loving parent who is delighted when we love him all the time and love all the people, God, grace, love, or life, that's ok! You can always go back to this box when you're ready.

14 Come Home Session One: The First Home 14

PERSONAL STUDY

Each week features three days of personal study to help you trace the theme of home through Scripture. You'll find questions to help you understand and apply the text, plus insightful commentary to clarify your study.

DAY FOUR


A SISTER'S STORY OF HOME

Big home or the one you build, there are times when you're not sure what you want. What is home for you? What are the things that make it home for you? What are the things that make it home for you? What are the things that make it home for you?

I want to share with you a story about a little sister in China. As she grows up, she sees the home that she has and the home that she wants. She sees the home that she has and the home that she wants. She sees the home that she has and the home that she wants.

Dear home,
 I love you so much, like a beautiful, beautiful home filled with memories and experiences that I will never forget. I love you so much, like a beautiful, beautiful home filled with memories and experiences that I will never forget. I love you so much, like a beautiful, beautiful home filled with memories and experiences that I will never forget.

Dear home,
 I love you so much, like a beautiful, beautiful home filled with memories and experiences that I will never forget. I love you so much, like a beautiful, beautiful home filled with memories and experiences that I will never forget. I love you so much, like a beautiful, beautiful home filled with memories and experiences that I will never forget.

14 

LETTERS

Day 4 of each week features a letter that expresses the writer's personal experience with home. The authors of these letters are women from different walks

of life. You'll have space to share how each letter resonated with you and helped you understand God's view of home.

THE FIRST HOME

In the beginning,
 God said, "Let there be light,"
 and there was light.
 And God saw that the light was good,
 and God separated the light from the darkness.
 And God called the light "Day,"
 and the darkness "Night."
 And there was evening,
 and there was morning,
 the first day.

God separated the light from the darkness,
 and God called the light "Day,"
 and the darkness "Night."
 And there was evening,
 and there was morning,
 the first day.

14 Session One: The First Home 14

POEMS

Caroline closes every week with a poem that captures the heart of the message for you to reflect on. The final poem of home—which includes a video read—is set apart on

pages 144-149 due to mentions of grief and loss. Take care as you determine whether to read and watch.

LEADER GUIDE

TIPS FOR LEADING A GROUP

101: 101: 101: Ask the group to prepare to lead this study. They individually and collectively think about the meaning of the word "home" in their own lives and how it applies to the group.

102: 102: 102: Lead the study. Take time to prepare each week, meet with a good group of the center. Lead one of the group sessions and consider those in your group that have a hard time with the questions presented, and ask questions that you can help.

103: 103: 103: Make sure you complete all of the personal study. It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

104: 104: 104: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

105: 105: 105: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

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111: 111: 111: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

112: 112: 112: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

113: 113: 113: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

114: 114: 114: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

115: 115: 115: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

116: 116: 116: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

117: 117: 117: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

118: 118: 118: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

119: 119: 119: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

120: 120: 120: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

121: 121: 121: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

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128: 128: 128: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

129: 129: 129: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

130: 130: 130: It's better to have more than you need, so you can be prepared for any questions that may come up.

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LEADING A GROUP?

You can locate a leader guide on page 140. The leader guide offers several tips and planning for each week. We've also provided intro videos to use as you're getting started. Instructions to access the videos can be found on page 160. To find additional resources for leaders, visit lifeway.com/comehome.



the
FIRST
HOME

session one

It was very good indeed.

GENESIS 1:31b

Home is hard to define, but we all know it when we see it, smell it, hear it—or when we miss it. Our stories are full of homesick moments, and maybe that’s why we have a tendency to look back—to try and grab onto what we once had. But when we look at God’s story of home in the Bible, it’s clear that for the Christ follower, home is not behind. Home is ahead. We’re all spiritually homesick, thinking we’re longing for something we once had while actually longing for something we’ve yet to have, something promised to God’s people.

In this week’s study, we’re going to look at the first home. God made it, and it was wonderful. But an enemy of home showed up, and soon, all hope of home seemed lost. However, God promised to defeat this enemy and make the way home.

GROUP GUIDE

session one

Don't forget to watch the intro video as you're getting started. Instructions to access the videos can be found on page 160.

COME ON IN

You probably decided to do this Bible study because you connected with the word *home*. It's a rich word that's hard to define, yet easy to recognize. It's a *place*, but not just a place! It's usually *people*, too, and there has to be a certain level of *peace* among the people for it to truly feel like home.

Home also affects our senses on every level. Something can sound, smell, or look like home. Home is a that particular blanket, the dog that barks for no reason, the way your mom makes a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

How would you finish this statement "To me, home is . . ."?

One example of home in my life is the front door of our old house, which I'd painted yellow. When we moved, my then three-year-old daughter cried and said, "I want to go to the house with the yellow door!" What she meant was, "I'm homesick." My daughter's tears reveal another thing about home: our deeply felt belief that home ought to be *permanent*—and yet it never is.

Our natural tendency is to look back and try to grasp at things from our past. But when we look at God's story of home in the Bible, it's clear that home is ahead. We're all spiritually homesick, longing to belong and be loved. So if you're longing for home, you are in the right place! God's Word will show us the way because all of it points to Jesus, who called Himself "the way." He is the way, and He is the way home.

TAKE A SEAT

To begin our study of home, let's look at the first home.

READ GENESIS 1:1. The Bible starts with this summary statement, and then we get specifics: God says “Let there be” a bunch of times, and then, every time, the thing will be. God’s word makes a way, always.

READ GENESIS 1:2-5.

What was the earth like in verse 2?

What made the light come to be?

How did God describe the light?

Right away it’s obvious that God creates good things, and He places them within life-giving boundaries. Regularly, the light will light, and regularly, it won’t. (Night!) This was the day one of creation.

Genesis 1:6-25 tell us about days two through six of creation, and they follow a similar pattern: God tells a thing to “be,” it does “be,” and it is good. Nothing was blah—it was all beautiful and bountiful. It was also incredibly orderly. Over and over, God placed his new creation within life-giving boundaries. The sea had a place, and so did the sky. The sun had a place, and so did the moon. Through a series of “let there be,” the world was filled with orderly awesomeness!

READ GENESIS 1:26-27. Before, God said, “Let there be,” but now God said, “Let us make.” Make is an artistry word! Humanity would be crafted with special care and intention and would be, somehow, like God. What an honor! (PS: If you look ahead to Genesis 2, you’ll get to “zoom in” on when God created man and woman. When man met woman, he wrote a poem! They experienced God-designed, perfect togetherness.)

Look over Genesis 1:28-31, and whenever you see the word “every” in your Bible, circle it. How many times did you spot it? What does this tell you about God?

The first people to hear the story of the first home were probably the Israelites that Moses led out of Egypt. (You can read about this in Exodus.) They would’ve been amazed by God! He wasn’t like the gods they’d heard about in Egypt. He is God of everything! But they struggled to trust God on their long journey home. But God wasn’t just leading them to a *place* but was forming them as a *people*. Maybe the story of the first home helped them understand the way home wasn’t merely a path but a Person.

Describe man and woman’s experience of home. (Think about the place, the people, and the peace they experienced.)

God is a God of abundance! He makes good things, and He gives them generously. I love that after all the creating, verse 30 says, “And it was so.” Of course it was! God’s word makes a way, always. By His word, God created a home—a place of peace and perfection—and its inhabitants.

How did God describe creation in verse 31?

If you’re familiar with this part of the Bible, you know a plot twist is coming. As the events in Genesis 3 began, the serpent tried to chip away at that perfect togetherness and trust. If this was a different kind of story, Eve would’ve said, “Ah! A talking snake!” and she would have run away, and that would be the end. But Eve never had any reason to be suspicious before, so she chatted with the slithery guy. Let’s analyze their conversation.

READ GENESIS 3:1-5.

How did the serpent (also known as Satan) tempt Eve to doubt God’s goodness?

How does Satan tempt you to doubt God—to be suspicious of God’s life-giving boundaries?

God created the whole world with His word, so it was pretty bold of the serpent (and man and woman) to doubt God’s word. (In our personal study this week, we’ll compare the serpent’s words to God’s words, because this is something we need to practice for our own lives.)

READ GENESIS 3:6-7.

What three things did Eve notice about the tree?

The first two things “good for food” and “delightful to look at” were true about all of the trees God had given them (Gen. 2:8-9). It was the third quality—wisdom—that tempted the woman. But wisdom isn’t something that comes from a tree—it comes from God (Prov. 1:7). The more man and woman walked with God, the more they’d become wise.

What did man and woman choose?

What was the immediate impact?

In this part of the story, Adam and Eve probably had a feeling similar to that dream when you’re naked in the school cafeteria. They try to cover themselves up, DIY-ing some clothes out of some leaves that would inevitably turn brown and shrivel and die and basically be the worst clothes ever. They thought eating the fruit was the path to good things—but it wasn’t.

Adam and Eve had sinned. Sin is anytime we step outside of God’s design. And sin is the ultimate enemy of home.

READ GENESIS 3:8-13.

Man and woman probably used to feel excited when they heard God coming. Now what did they feel?

Throughout this study, you’ll hear me say that sin is the enemy of home. It is! Think about how pride, jealousy, selfishness, rage, and other sin rip at the fabric of our earthly homes. But know that behind sin is an enemy of God: The serpent, who we know as Satan. He introduced sin into the first home, and he wants nothing more than to tear down everything God calls good (Eph. 6:12). He will use lies and deception to influence us to choose destructive sin. But he will be crushed through the cross and empty tomb of the woman’s offspring, Jesus Christ.

Why did man say they hid?

What kind of blaming do you notice in verses 12-13?

Sin entered this home like an intruder, destroying togetherness and trust and setting up shame, blame, and suspicion. Sin promises good stuff but can only deliver bad. But there's good news: God will always, always deal with sin.

Write Genesis 3:15 below.

This verse gives the first hint of God's plan to rescue this home! It promises the defeat of the serpent and his weapon of sin. The Eden promise is: *"The enemy of home will be destroyed."*

In your personal study this week, we'll learn more about this promise and how God dealt with sin in the garden that day. We'll get a better understanding of home's great enemy (sin), and how home will look with this enemy around.

READ GENESIS 3:21-24.

What did God provide for man and woman?

Why did man and woman have to leave the garden?

In one of the saddest moments in all of Scripture, Adam and Eve had to leave the garden God made for them. Because sin had made its home in their hearts, this home was no longer safe. The tree of life was there, and it would be disastrous for Adam and Eve to reach for this and live forever while soaked in sin! Once again, God offered a life-giving boundary. He is always good, and He would make the way home.

LET'S TALK

What does the goodness and abundance of the first home teach us about God? Does that challenge your thoughts on God in any way? Explain.

In what areas of your life do you currently see God's goodness on display?

How does this part of God's story provide hope for a current struggle?

If someone asked you what you learned in our time together today, what would you say?

LET'S PRAY

The first few chapters of Genesis help us see something at work in our own lives: sin is the enemy of home. In some way, we all have experienced this. As we end this time together, how can we pray for one another? Write down any prayer requests, and come back here throughout the week. As you pray, remember the promise of home ahead.

DAY ONE

THE GOOD HOMEMAKER

No one makes a home like God.

LOOK UP PROVERBS 3:19 AND HEBREWS 11:3 and write both verses below.

God built the first home with His word—with His wisdom! The first home was spectacularly lovely and jam-packed with the fruit of God’s wisdom, crammed with evidence that God’s word is powerful. The big theme here is *life*. God speaks life-giving words, offers life-giving boundaries, and even gives His creation the ability to create more life.

DAY ONE OF CREATION (GEN. 1:3-5) INTRODUCES US TO A PATTERN: GOD SAYS, GOD SETS, GOD SHOWS.

- God **said**, “Let there be light,” and then, BOOM! there was light.
- He also **set** a life-giving boundary—sometimes the light would light (day), and sometimes the light would not (night).
- God **showed** His goodness. God called the light good, and of course it was.

This *says, sets, shows* pattern holds from days two through six of creation.

Read Genesis 1:6-25, and keep an eye out for the *says, sets, shows* pattern. Then, pick two of the days listed, and answer the questions below:

Day 2: Genesis 1:6-8

Day 3: Genesis 1:9-13

Day 4: Genesis 1:14-19

Day 5: Genesis 1:20-23

Day 6, before man:

Genesis 1:24-25

DAY _____

What did God say?

What boundary did God set?

How did God show His goodness?

DAY _____

What did God say?

What boundary did God set?

How did God show His goodness?

When you've finished paying attention to Genesis 1:6-25, check this box . *(There's no reason for this except that we just love a box-checking moment.)*

Confession: I have this tendency to think of God as a grumpy, cross-armed principal with a clipboard where He writes down all the bad stuff I do. He might say, "Late again, I see," or "Well, I'll forgive you, but I'm not happy about it," or rattle off a bunch of rules designed to squash any fun I might be having.

Do you relate to this in any way? Explain.

SOMETIMES GOD SHOWS HIS GOODNESS IN AN OBVIOUS WAY ("GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD" IS SAID A LOT!), AND SOMETIMES THE GOODNESS IS IMPLIED BY THE BEAUTY AND BOUNTY OF HIS CREATION. THIS IS A REALLY COOL THING TO CONSIDER ABOUT GOD—HE DIDN'T HAVE TO MAKE THINGS WONDERFUL, BUT HE DID!

BIBLE STUDY TIP:

IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE WRITING IN YOUR BIBLE, YOU CAN LABEL THESE THINGS AS YOU READ THE PASSAGE. (FOR EXAMPLE, YOU COULD UNDERLINE THE WORDS GOD SAID, CIRCLE THE BOUNDARY GOD SET, AND ✨ STAR THE GOODNESS GOD SHOWED.) AS YOU READ, YOU MAY WANT TO PLACE A QUESTION MARK ? BY ANYTHING THAT CONFUSES YOU. MAYBE A FUTURE STUDY DAY WILL ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, OR PERHAPS YOU CAN DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR GROUP WHEN YOU MEET.

The creation narrative (and probably every other part of the Bible) blows my wrong view of God to smithereens. It's clear His word is powerful, His boundaries are life-giving, and His goodness is evidenced everywhere. God isn't a grumpy principal we try to dodge in the hallways of life. He's an open-armed Homemaker whose home we want to run to!

What does the creation narrative teach you about God's words?

How does the creation narrative inform the way you view God's boundaries?

How does the creation narrative help you remember God's goodness?

Too often, we're tempted to be like Eve and think God is holding out on us (Gen. 3:1-7). But the Eden narrative resets our wonky inner compass. God is not just good—He's the author of good! God not only gives us our lives—He makes our lives lively! The first home equips us to wipe the smudge off our glasses and view the whole concept of home through a clearer lens. Truly, we can trust God's promises of home—because the whole notion of home has its origin in Him alone.



DAY TWO

THE TOGETHER HOME

Have you ever been in a home that looked great and had great stuff but you didn't really feel at home? Sometimes "perfect" homes can make us feel too human, like, *What if I spill something, and they get mad at me?*

But here's wonderful news: God made the first home *with humanity in mind!* God made a home where humans could be with Him, and it was every bit as wonderful as you can imagine.

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VERSES. How does each one help you understand God's purpose for creation?

Psalm 115:16

Isaiah 45:18

We already know this narrative is about to go "nail polish on the white carpet," but before it does, let's once again soak in the goodness of this first home.

Pick two of the following verses, and explain how they show God's *consideration* for humanity and the *closeness* that was enjoyed in this first home.

Genesis 1:29-30

Genesis 2:16-17

Genesis 2:23

Genesis 2:8-9

Genesis 2:18

Genesis 2:25

VERSE	CONSIDERATION How can you tell that God thoughtfully shaped this home for people?	CLOSENESS What details point to togetherness?

God created this home not just for Himself and not just for humanity. God created this home for humanity to be *with* Him.

But look, it's not like God was sitting around, twiddling His holy thumbs and wishing He had someone to hang out with. If you've ever heard the word *Trinity* at church, you may know this cool yet confusing thing about God: God is one, and yet God is three. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are one, yet because God is three Persons, God enjoys perfect closeness and community. The first home is not God inventing togetherness but inviting people into it!

What images, memories, or ideas come to your mind when you hear the word *togetherness*?

Why do you think togetherness matters?

LOOK UP GENESIS 3:8 and write it below.

This verse occurs after sin entered the picture, but it also gives us a glimpse of what garden of Eden togetherness might've been like. God was walking in the cool of the day; the man and woman heard Him.

That day, Adam and Eve hid. But it's clear that hadn't always been the case. The Hebrew word for God's action in this verse indicates this walking was God's normal habit.¹ We can't help but wonder how many moments of not hiding Adam and Eve enjoyed before sin intruded their hearts, unpacking its suitcase of shame and separation.

God designed home to be a place where people are considered and experience closeness with Him and one another. It makes sense that in our homes, we want to feel considered—like someone wants us to be there and made space for us. We want to feel closeness—like we are liked and loved, like we belong.

Where do you notice a longing for “garden togetherness” in your life?

How does God’s story encourage you in your story?

DAY THREE

HOME'S ENEMY

When I was a teenager, someone broke into my grandparents' home, a place that was really special for me. No one was hurt, but I remember feeling violated when I heard the news. Who would dare to steal here? Couldn't they tell it was home? But thieves don't honor what is precious: they take it.

READ GENESIS 3:1-5.

Complete the chart by writing down the serpent's words. Then, compare them to God's words.

THE SERPENT'S WORDS	GOD'S WORDS
GENESIS 3:1 Did God really say, "You can't eat from any tree in the garden"?	GENESIS 2:16-17a And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden."
GENESIS 3:4	GENESIS 2:17b "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." [Notice that this boundary is life-giving, meant to keep them living as God designed!]
GENESIS 3:5	GENESIS 1:26-27 "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness."

The serpent invited Eve to doubt what God says; to feel suspicious of the boundaries God set; to question the goodness God has shown. The serpent placed doubt in her mind about whether God had really considered her. He attacked the home's closeness by implying that this home is not full of wonderful surprises but full of secrets. His message is something like, "God seems good—but He's actually keeping good stuff from you."

Have you ever encountered a message like this? If so, what was the situation and how did you respond?

God's word played a powerful role in the formation of the first home. What role did *disbelieving* God's word play in the corruption of the first home?

When do you notice you're prone to pay attention to Satan's words and ignore God's words?

Genesis 3:6 says, "The woman saw that the tree was (1) good for food and (2) delightful to look at, and (3) that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom" (numbers added). God Himself made the trees to have qualities 1 and 2 (Gen. 2:9). But (3) wisdom can only come from God (Prov. 9:10). If Eve wanted wisdom, she needed to follow God. Instead, she followed the serpent.

The serpent told man and woman that if they ate this fruit, their eyes would be opened (Gen. 3:5). But they didn't understand this uncovering wouldn't be exciting. It would be exposing, like a spotlight in the shower.

What do Adam and Eve do in Genesis 3:7 to address their shame? Do you think this actually helped?

Have you ever responded to your sin and shame in a similar fashion? Explain.

The theme of their home had been life, but now death seemed all around. They didn't immediately drop dead, but the process of death had begun, and their sin caused the venom of sin to begin to seep into the world's veins.

The rest of Genesis 3 is full of hiding, blame, and consequences for the serpent, Adam, and Eve. It reminds us over and over of what we already know: *Sin is the enemy of home*. Pride, jealousy, selfishness, rage, immorality, and other sin rips at the fabric of our earthly homes. But know that behind sin is an enemy of God: The serpent (also known as Satan, the devil, the deceiver, the accuser, etc.). He was the one who introduced sin into the first home, and he still works to tempt us to sin. We must be on guard against sin, always ready to recognize it as an enemy, as something that will bring death.

Is it hard to see sin as an enemy sometimes? Why?

How has sin been the enemy in your story of home?

The good news is that God will deal with this enemy. Within the serpent's consequences, God gave a promise to humanity.

LOOK UP GENESIS 3:15 and write it below.

God covered Adam and Eve's shame and sent them away from their once-perfect home, but one day, He would send a Child who would defeat the serpent and, therefore, sin. This is the Eden promise: *"The enemy of home will be destroyed."*

DAY FOUR

A SISTER'S STORY OF HOME

The creation narrative teaches us that we were made to be at home with God—and it also teaches us that the enemy of home is sin.

On the final study day of each week, I'll share with you a letter from a fellow sister in Christ. As she shares her story of home, I hope it will help you better understand God's story of home and help you feel less alone in your own story.

Dear Sister,

Home and the feeling of homesickness has always been kind of a theme in my life, and so has the feeling of not really belonging anywhere. I'm adopted from China, so that's probably where part of it comes from. I don't know for what reasons my biological parents gave me away or why I ended up in the orphanage. I don't feel Chinese since I was raised with Western values. But I also don't feel Dutch since I don't look the same as my Dutch family.

God blessed me by giving me the two loveliest parents. They raised me with their whole hearts and all the love they have. They also raised me in faith, letting me know I have a heavenly Father who watches over me and holds me in His hand and that I belong in His kingdom, as His daughter. He knows where I come from and for what reasons my life came to be, and He has been there with me all the time. I belong with Him as His daughter! :)

Like Psalm 139:13-14 (KJV) beautifully says: "For Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are Thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well."

Even though (if all is well) there are many things and people to love on earth, it's nothing close to how much God loves us and wants us with Him! That thought gives me so much strength and peace! We are wandering the earth but our home—our true home where we belong—is with Him.

God is great!

— JADE VAN DER ZALM,
illustrator, the Netherlands



JADE ILLUSTRATED MY
CHILDREN'S BOOK,
THE STORY OF HOME!

Use the space below (or your own journal) to respond to this letter. You may want to use the following questions to guide your response.

What thoughts and feelings are you experiencing as you consider this sister's story?

What from her letter most resonates with you and why?

How does her story help you remember God's invitation to belong and be loved?

THE FIRST HOME

*In the beginning,
God used His word
To turn a bunch of nothing
Into land, sea, beasts, birds*

*Man was created by God
And was created for home
Look how God provided
Look how man was known*

*He made us to bear His image
To point the world to Him
At first this purpose seemed plenty
Until the deceiver stepped in*

*“Did God really say?”
The serpent questioned the Word
It made us start to wonder
Did we really hear what we heard?*

*Sin promised to give
But really it was a crook
It intruded our home
And took, and took, and took*

*God punished but promised
A Seed would be sown
To provide our salvation
To make our way home*