

## “Beginnings & Separation”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a **flexible guide** that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

### Message Summary

We live in stories. Stories are the language of our world. Stories speak to the mind, the body, the emotions—our spirits. In a story, we can identify with situations we have never been in. Our imagination can be unlocked to dream what before was unimaginable. Together we learn about life as we connect through stories. We all yearn to know many of the same parts of the Story...*What happened before time began? How did all of this start? Who or what created me!? Why do I exist? Does my life really matter, does it have meaning? To who? What happens after I die? Why is the world the way it is...? Things don’t seem to be going that well...why?*

The Bible is God’s Story; a grand narrative about God and all He has created and His plan for humanity. Just like any other book, the bible has a single theme that runs throughout – redemption. A big difference between the Bible and other stories, however, is that the Bible was written over a period of 1500 years by more than 40 different human authors in 3 different languages and yet has amazing unity and carries throughout the same theme of redemption. But like your story the Bible is complicated with lots of characters, twists and turns, and requires reading it more than once to gain all the truths God has for you in it.

Genesis 1-3 tells the first part of the Story – how it all began and how things fell apart. In these first chapters we learn about the God who created everything and His perfect plan for us. We learn how Satan interrupted everything. We learn how humans broke everything. But we also learn how God in His grace and mercy made plans to restore everything. The Story was set into motion but many questions were left unanswered. Through this beginning and separation we realize our own life story follows the same pattern. We also find that truly our life story is hard to understand apart from understanding God’s Story.

This first sermon in the StoryFormed Way series, a series based on the StoryFormed Way training distributed by Soma Communities, will set us on a 10-week journey where we will discover God’s Story in a fresh way and how it impacts our life stories. Through the sermons, our family meetings, and the StoryFormed Way training every week we will learn to tell the story to others so they might share in the salvation we enjoy. As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community this week review the message outline, examine the questions on the following page, and prepare yourself for this exciting journey as we dive into God’s Story, the only Story that can transform your life!

### Message Outline

4 Truths we see in the Beginning:

**1. The Story Begins with God.**

He is Eternal Creator.  
He is Sovereign King.  
He is Righteous Judge.  
He is Merciful Savior.

**2. The Story is Interrupted by Satan.**

Created.  
Clever.  
Condemned.

**3. The Story is Broken by People.**

Created for God’s Glory.  
Rejected God’s Plan.  
Need God’s Redemption.

**4. The Story is Rewritten by God.**

Separation → Pursuit → Restoration.

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### **Group Discussion**

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

In regard to Genesis 1-3:

1. What does this passage say about God’s character?
2. What is God doing here? How does this passage fit in the overall narrative of the Bible?
3. What is God saying about me?
4. Where am I not living by faith? How do I return to faith?
5. How should I practice this in everyday life?

### **Weekly Prayer Focus**

- **Church:**
  - Pray that God would give us new believers and covenant members.
  - Pray that all who have believed the Gospel will obey Jesus in believer’s baptism.
  - Pray for new relationships that will lead to Gospel conversations.
  - Pray for the elders as they lead us to accomplish the mission.
  - Pray for the Missional Communities to establish their goals and objects and begin to live them out.
  - Pray for the 2016 Financial Ministry Plan as we seek to be a church of disciples who make disciples of all the nations.
- **Local:**
  - Pray for those who will be invited to the Storyformed Way, a 10-week journey through the Story of God. Pray for open and receptive hearts and for God to use this journey to draw people to Himself.
  - Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities, neighborhoods, and at work.
  - Pray that God will identify 5 people you can begin to invest in and engage with the Gospel.
- **Global:**
  - Pray that God would give you a heart for the nations.
  - Pray for the team working in SEA, the new believers, for those who have heard the Gospel, and the church planting movement among the unreached.
  - Pray for Good Shepherd Ministries and Bill & Sandy Younger.
  - Pray for Servants Hearts Ministries and Bob & Georgette Kornegay.
  - Pray for Pastor Abraham and his church in Guatemala.