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**Faithful: *Genesis and the God Who's Always Working***

- ⇒ Remember that groups are a place to practice what is preached—in community with God and one another.
- ⇒ Ice Breaker: If you could go on a seven-day all expenses paid vacation anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

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1. What most impacted you or stood out to you from the message on Sunday? How did God speak to you?
  2. In **Genesis 2:16-17**, God commanded the man not to eat from a specific tree in the garden. The Bible gives no explanation for this. God simply commands obedience because he is God and man is not.

Matt mentioned the distinction between common virtue and true virtue, as defined by Jonathan Edwards (*The Nature of True Virtue*, published posthumously in 1765).

**Common virtue** is driven by self-love. It's doing good, doing what is right, out of motives that are ultimately sinful—out of fear (what will or won't happen, if I do or don't do this...) or pride (I don't want to be like people who do this, or don't do that...).

**True virtue** is doing what is good and right simply out of love for God. It's doing good because he is good, being generous because he is generous, showing grace because he has shown you grace, etc.

- ⇒ Discuss the difference between common virtue motivated by self-love (by fear or pride) and true virtue motivated by love for God. Where do you find yourself doing (or not doing) what is right out of fear or pride rather than love for God?
  - ⇒ Do you find it hard to accept some things simply because "God says"? Try to be honest here. Most of us do, at one time or another.
3. **Genesis 1** is a form of Hebrew poetry, kind of like a song. All of creation is seen as "good" by God. He is delighted with his creation and creation sings his glory and praise. Have a couple of members from the group read **Psalms 19:1-2** and **Psalms 96:1-11**.

We understand this intuitively as we take in the mountains, the ocean, the majestic power of a thunderstorm, or the sounds of birds singing as the sun rises in the morning. And yet, we can't fully experience it. And in the moments we do, we can't hold onto it.

Read the following quote we heard on Sunday from C.S. Lewis:

*"We do not just want to see beauty when we look at nature, we want something else which we can hardly put into words, we want to be united with the beauty that we see. We want to pass into it. We want to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. At present we feel like we're on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and the beauty of the morning but they don't make us fresh and beautiful. We cannot mingle with the splendors we see; we feel cut off from something."*

- ⇒ How have you felt this "fracture" in the world created by sin, by the sin of humanity, by your sin?

God reveals the first hint of the gospel in **Genesis 3:15**. The promise and beauty of the gospel is not just that people are “saved,” but that everything that’s gone wrong is going to be made right (**Isaiah 65:17; Romans 8:18-21; Colossians 1:19-20; Revelation 21:5**).

- ⇒ Do you understand the good news of the gospel in this way?
- ⇒ How does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus give you healing and power for *this* life, not just hope and assurance for the next?
- ⇒ How does the gospel give healing and power to social structures and cultures, not just individuals?

**Challenge:** Schedule a specific time before the next group meeting to simply experience nature. Look, listen, and smell. Meditate on God’s goodness revealed in his creation.

**Close with a time of prayer for your group, our church, and for the courage to truly live Christ-centered lives in our families, church family, and community.**