



WEEK 2 NOTES

To start your discussion, you may want to take time to read the introduction on page 33 aloud to your group. All the missing intro questions and pray prompts for the entire study in one document are uploaded on the website and app.

Day 1 - What's Wrong With the World?

In this day, how sin affects the world. On Day 2, we look at how sin affects humanity.

So today we concentrate on the world that points to the goodness and glory of God. On page 35, we learn that God created everything from nothing (creation ex nihilo- it means creation out of nothing in Latin. We get the word annihilation from the word nihilo). We take the creativity and wisdom of the word for granted every day. But, we should not, as creation points to the existence of an intelligent designer, God.

The world itself has been disrupted and infected by sin. We see it every day. Hurricanes, earthquakes and blizzards all point to sin – which should then point us to the holiness of God.

Day 2 - What is Wrong With Me?

Now we move from the world to humanity. The world has been infected by sin, and so have we. Since God created us from nothing- God makes the rules. He calls the shots. And He designed mankind to experience the fullness of life in intimate fellowship with Him. That all fell apart for humanity in Genesis chapter 3.

Satan convinced Adam and Eve that God was "holding out on them". That He could not be trusted and that ultimate fulfillment could be found apart from Him. We were made to worship- so Satan twisted that, and made us believe that it was better to worship ourselves than our Creator.

What stood out to your ladies differently after they studied Adam and Eve's behavior in the garden? How can they relate to Eve's behavior? Did this day help them to understand the gravity of our sin?

Day 3 - It Really Is That Bad

So- today was a pretty tough lesson. I followed right in line with where Matt Chandler led us. Why IS God so severe? Why IS hell that bad? Am I REALLY that bad? Do I REALLY deserve that kind of punishment? When we follow this line of thinking, it points to the self-centered spiral of no solution. This is what Matt points out in the middle of page 43. The remedy for this is to focus on the holiness and goodness of God. It is because God is that GOOD that things we don't think are that bad, REALLY are that bad. It reminds me of what Tim Mackie said- God's holiness and goodness is like the sun. It is life giving, but it is also dangerous. It cannot be played with.

This maybe a day that your ladies need to marinate on for a while. This is not a concept that we talk about too much in church, let alone the world! No matter what knots this may put our stomach in, what it leads us to is that Jesus loves us so much to deal with this situation. In Him we are clothed with righteousness, and have been saved from the consequence of our sin. It does not get any better than that.

I like the prompt at the end of this day. Confess our sin to God. Make no excuses for them. Consider the severity of God. It is when we fully understand the bad news, that we can fully appreciate the good news.

Day 4 - The Wisdom Of God In The Cross

Another big idea is unpacked in this day. Just understanding the hell is not enough. We cannot scare people into bring Christ followers. The end motive behind talking about hell and the severity of God is not scare people, but for people to recognize the love that God demonstrated by bridging that chasm through Christ. This brings a whole new meaning to Romans 11:22, which I find kind of hard. "Consider God's kindness and severity; severity toward those who have fallen but God's kindness toward you."

I don't know about you- but I feel like the yellow boxes always cushion the blow of what we are studying. I like the one on page 46. It helps make sense of God's need for bloodshed in the Old Testament. We are kind of used to this idea, but it may seem weird to some ladies., and I appreciate Matt Chandler recognizing that.

As gross as the blood seems, it is such a better alternative than us trying to "white knuckle" holiness, which we will always fail at. As Matt states- it leads to shame, discouragement, anxiety. Isn't it better for God just to be straight with us? He says to us, "This is the severity of the problem and this is the only solution. " Again, big ideas to wrestle with.

Day 5 - A Whole Life

Ecclesiastes is a chronicle of lessons learned. And it is pretty somber. The big idea is that we need to get to the point where we realize and accept that real meaning lies outside of the world's system. Without the gospel we will never feel whole. I like how Matt ties the simple and sweet story of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well to the message of Ecclesiastes. This might help the ladies better understand what Ecclesiastes is getting at. The world will always leave you thirsty again, but Jesus never will.