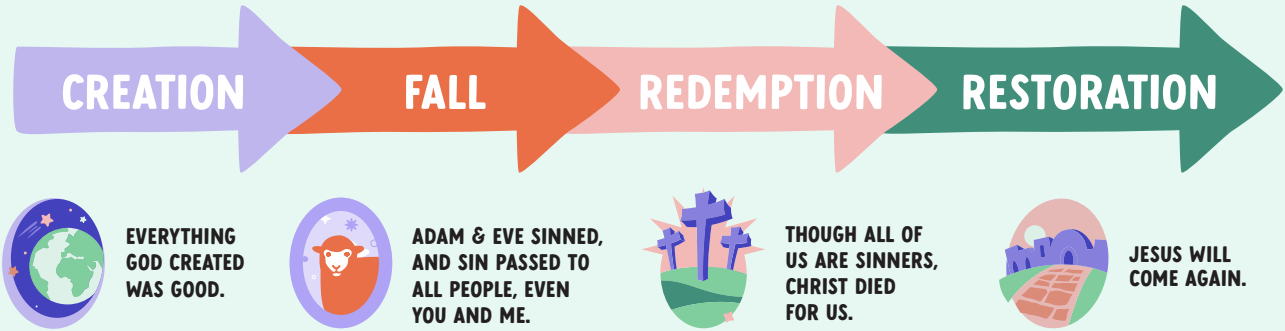


GOD'S BIG STORY



FIND IT IN THE BIBLE: MATTHEW

This week's story comes from the book of Matthew. Matthew is the first of four books known as the Gospels. The author of this book is likely Matthew, the tax collector who became a follower of Jesus. The book of Matthew gives readers a perspective on the life of Jesus and confirms Him as the Messiah.

OT-NT CONNECTION

From the beginning of God's relationship with humans, He has commanded people to be perfect and without sin.

- In Genesis 17:1, God tells Abraham to walk before Him and be blameless.
- In Leviticus 19:2, God tells Moses to tell the people to be holy because God is holy.
- In Deuteronomy 18:9-14, God tells the Israelites to keep themselves from being influenced by other nations and to be blameless before Him.

IS PERFECTIONISM A SIN?

When we try to live so that others see how perfect we are, we are missing the mark of how God wants us to live. Perfectionism encourages others to look at us. Trying to be more like God points the people around us to God and what He is doing in our lives. If our focus is ourselves, that is pride; and pride is a sin. If our focus is growing in our relationship with God, that is faith.

READ



Read Matthew 5:43-48. Notice what Jesus says about how we should treat our enemies. What do those verses tell us about God's perfect love? If we love people who hate us, how does that make us more like God?

IF I CAN NEVER BE PERFECT LIKE GOD, WHY TRY?

The short answer is because that is what Jesus told us. The longer answer is that the more time we spend with God, the more we will want to become more like God. Your faith is not something you do for God, it is a relationship with Him. The more we learn about God and Who He is, the more our lives will reflect His perfect character.

JOURNAL



Ephesians 5:1 says we should be imitators of God, and 2 Corinthians 7:1 says we should cleanse ourselves from anything that keeps us from being holy. What is one thing that is keeping you from growing up in your faith? Is it a sin or behavior or habit? Write a short prayer asking God to help you change that to be an imitator of Him more every day.