

Chapter 1

Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *What does it mean to say that a husband and wife become “one body” (Genesis 2:24)?*

They are now one family. They are spiritually and legally bound to each other. They also physically become one in that their bodies become connected in the sexual act of love. Their children are a manifestation of the couple’s “oneness.” A couple becomes one on an emotional level too, because they share the difficulties and joys that life brings. Spiritually, husband and wife become one through their deep mutual love, a love that mirrors the love God has for all his children.

2. *Explain what Pope Saint John Paul II meant when he said that married couples feel no shame, like Adam and Eve before the Fall.*

Pope John Paul II emphasized that humans were made to be good, including our bodies. When sin entered the world, lust became part of the human experience. When we lust, we objectify people by seeing them merely as sexual objects to be used for our own pleasure. Before sin, Adam and Eve felt no shame and did not see each other as an object for their own pleasure. We can get a glimpse of this acceptance of each other in the loving relationship of marriage. When a husband and wife know each other’s value as a person, they feel safe. They do not feel shame around each other because they have fully given themselves to each other. In marriage they become “one body” united by love.

3. *What do we mean when we say the two Creation accounts in Genesis use figurative or symbolic language?*

The Creation accounts in Genesis use figurative or symbolic language because they are a type of literature that symbolically explains some natural or social phenomenon. Figurative language can teach us religious truths, but it is not meant to be scientifically or historically accurate. For example, with the seven days of Creation, chapter 1 of Genesis uses figurative language to teach an important religious truth: God created the world with order and purpose. We should not interpret this story to mean that God literally created the universe in six 24-hour days.

4. *What does eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolize?*

Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil symbolizes Adam and Eve’s disobedience of God and God’s will for them. This created a state of sin in which they viewed themselves as separate from God and from each other. It represents the event when humanity lost its original holiness and justice.

5. *What are etiologies, and how are they used in Genesis to explain the consequences of sin?*

Etiology is the study of the origins or causes of things. Myths often have etiologies that explain the origins of certain social or natural occurrences or even place names. The etiologies in Genesis are not intended to be scientific explanations, but rather are creative explanations of how sin leads to shame, brings isolation, causes pain and suffering, disrupts our harmony with nature, and leads us away from God and life.



6. *Explain this statement from Saint Paul: “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).*

Saint Paul is teaching that there are consequences to sin, the most damaging of which is the death of the soul. Sin can bring about many types of death, such as an end to a friendship or a loss of trust. Sin disrupts the harmony that God intended. It causes a spiritual death that separates us from God and one another.

7. *Explain concupiscence using the account of Cain and Abel.*

Concupiscence is the tendency of all human beings toward sin and is a consequence of Original Sin. After Adam and Eve’s sin, Cain was jealous because the Lord favored Abel’s offering, so he murdered his brother. Concupiscence was the “urge” that God warned Cain about, and it manifested itself as jealousy. Concupiscence did not force Cain to commit this grave sin; it was just the urge that tempted him to do so.

8. *What is communal sin? Explain how the account of Noah and the Flood is an example of communal sin.*

Communal sin refers to sinful situations for which entire communities can be held accountable. These can come in the form of a nation’s laws. In the account of Noah and the Great Flood, sin had become such a deeply rooted part of society that God dealt with the people as a whole. Only Noah and his family were innocent of this sin and were spared.

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