EPISODE 0 (SESSION 1)

Introductory Lesson

Have you ever read a novel that tells a story from multiple characters' perspectives? Or read a "spin-off" of a well known narrative that retells it from a different point of view? In most of these examples the plot, characters, and outcomes don't necessarily change, but there is something extremely eye-opening when we are dropped into the perspective of someone other than the well-known, archetypal main character—whether it be the other hero of the story, the comedic sidekick, the mentor, or even the perceived antagonist. Many of these stories begin to carry more weight and depth when these other voices are heard. **The BEMA Podcast seeks to do something similar with the greatest story ever told—God's story, *but* we don't want you to experience this version of the story alone.**

we don't want you to experience this version of the story alone.

This companion is being written the morning after an Episode 0 discussion. A new group of individuals each carrying their own baggage, backgrounds, and beliefs. Join us at this table for a moment—Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Evangelicals and ex-Evangelicals, unchurched and curious, educators and counselors, divinity and medical students, amongst other vast theological and traditional backgrounds left unsaid. You take a bite of enchiladas and listen as each individual shares what brought them to the table:

> *"So and so recommended the podcast when I started to ask difficult questions."*
> *"My son wanted to learn more, so we're here together."*
> *"I checked the BEMA map!"*
> *"You [points at group leader] made me."* Cue laughter.

Join me now, a few days earlier, with another group that has lived some life together. They've wrestled through the Text as well as journeyed through job loss, citizenship approvals, financial distress, a global pandemic, and more. They are wrapping up their discussion of Session 5. They've sat around this table having gone through the entirety of Scripture and church history over the course of years of gatherings surrounding the BEMA content. The colors of their skin and heritage are diverse. Young and adult. Parents, couples, and singles. Some still unsure where they stand with God but just can't walk away from the heart of Jesus. Others that devour the Text and the commentaries by great theologians surrounding it. I**t's been a beautiful, inclusive community that never wholly agrees on everything, but can always agree on the most important thing—how to love each other well.**

always agree on the most important thing—how to love each other well.

No matter what you know or what you believe or the many questions you have, we are so glad you've joined us in listening to the BEMA Podcast. Before you dive into Episode 1, if you haven't yet, **we encourage you to find a group or community—that divinely safe space**—where you can eat and drink and laugh, and then ask the questions that you've been wrestling with and maybe haven't had the tools to sift through yet. If you're in a place where a group is unavailable or difficult to find, try to recruit a friend to listen along or join our BEMA Slack community (see our website for this).

It's these communities that help us enter into the garden and put our hands in the dirt. That teach us the harmonies that add beauty and depth to the familiar melodies many of us have known since childhood. It is through the eyes of others we can learn so much more about ourselves and the Kingdom that God created.

it is through the eyes of others we can learn so much more about ourselves and the Kingdom.

As you are challenged to see through this different lens, **may you lean into your community, learn from each other, and venture into the greatest story ever told** in ways you never knew existed simply because you are ready to experience it from another beloved character's point of view.

PRAYER

We bless you God for the people that surround us.
Take our hearts and minds and bodies
and make the space we inhabit one of safety, peace,
and authenticity.

As we begin to read the Text through this different perspective,
help us to also keep in mind the differences of each one of us,
and delight in what you are going to teach us
through the voices of one another.
Bring us compassion. Brings us humility.
Bring us community.

Amen

THE FOUR PILLARS

EPISODE 0



BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:

I

TEXT

What piece of the Text could you meditate over and memorize this week? Consider Genesis 1, as we start "in the beginning" in our next episode.

II

COMMUNITY

Who do you have intentional relationships with that help you practice unity and authenticity? Why might this be difficult for some of us?

III

DISCIPLESHIP

Is there anyone that you're taking with you into these new places? Who could you invite into this space or to walk this journey with you?

IV

WRESTLING

What questions do you have after this lesson? What challenges you about the conversation of these different lenses? What resonates with you? Confuses you?

Spotify

Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.

BEMA SESSION 1

MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

True success is developing intimacy with God. Later in Session 1, you will encounter the idea of "Creating Space for God" in our lives. We believe that ***if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it*** *as He desires. You're already doing this as you dive into the Text and jumping in a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS
YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world. *Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION
THEOLOGY OF WORK

This isn't just for our time at church or Bible study; this is about what we do at work every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something that God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. ***The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***

© 2024 BEMA Discipleship