

THE RELATIONSHIP BROKEN

BIBLE PASSAGES: Genesis 3

THE POINT: Sin messed everything up, but God is still in control.

TODAY'S PURPOSE: To lead adults to affirm that though sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, every generation has continued to sin.

VBS SCRIPTURE: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by Him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. *Colossians 1:15-16*

BONUS VERSE: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. *Romans 3:23*

NOTES

BIBLE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes physical things get broken; dishes and cars, for example. Perhaps they can be repaired, perhaps not. Sometimes relationships get broken. These are usually a lot more difficult to repair than dishes or cars. God made us to have a relationship with Him, but we have all broken that relationship. So is the situation hopeless? Can anything be done to repair what we have broken?

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL (GENESIS 3:1-7)

Genesis 1 is the record of how God created the heavens and the earth. Chapter 2 describes how God provided everything Adam and Eve needed—meaningful work, perfect relationships, and God's guidance on how to maintain all of this. God gave them something meaningful to do, to take care of the beautiful garden He had made for them. (Genesis 2:15) He created them in perfect relationship with Himself, with each other, and with their environment. And He taught them that the way to continue to enjoy this paradise was to trust Him by not eating from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:17) However, the man and the woman refused to trust God and suffered the consequences God had warned would come.

Genesis 3:1 explains how the man and woman were tempted to distrust God. The text says, "the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals the Lord God had made." From Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 we know that the person speaking through "the serpent" was actually the Devil or Satan, the fallen angel and archenemy of God. His temptation consisted of three elements: exaggerating the limit God had placed on them (3:1); asserting that God had lied to them (3:4); and claiming that God wanted to keep them from being like Him. (3:5)

Eve bought into Satan's lies and began to seriously consider disobeying God's command. The fruit was attractive and looked tasty, but the big draw was that Eve wanted the wisdom and status that Satan claimed would result from the fruit. Of course, the temptation involved more than eating forbidden fruit. The real temptation was to distrust God and His love, love that Adam and Eve had already experienced.

Eve made her choice. She chose Satan's lie over God's truth and love. She not only picked the fruit and ate it but also gave some to her husband to eat. Let's be careful to avoid putting all the blame on Eve. The Scripture says Adam was with her. He would have been able to hear all of Satan's lies. Yet, instead of being the leader he should have been and protecting his wife from such danger, he did nothing except to follow her faithless example. Verse 7 says, "then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked." Their guilt caused them to be ashamed of their condition, not only before God but even before each other.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (GENESIS 3:8-24)

The first consequence of Adam's and Eve's sin was that their relationship with God was broken. Instead of welcoming His presence, they hid from Him. (3:8-10) When God confronted them with their sin, they both tried to shift the blame to someone else. Adam tried to blame Eve ("The woman ... she gave me some fruit from the tree") and even God ("The woman You gave to be with me"). Eve tried to blame the serpent ("It was the serpent. He deceived me, and I ate.").

God ignored their excuses and began to administer His righteous judgment. He started with the serpent and pronounced a curse on him. His crawling and having to "eat dust" (3:14) would forever be a symbol of God's judgment on the representative of evil. Of course, God's real focus wasn't on the snake but on Satan. The imagery of verse 15 alludes to the ongoing hostility between Satan and his angels and the human race ("your seed and her seed"). As long as God allows Satan to exist, he will always be mankind's "adversary ... looking for anyone he can devour." (1 Pet. 5:8) In His judgment on Satan, God also made a promise to the people He had made in His image. (1:26) One day Satan would use all his cunning to attack one of the woman's descendants ("you will strike his heel"). However, that person would totally defeat Satan ("strike your head"). Who was God talking about?

We know from the rest of Scripture that God was talking about Jesus Christ. He would literally be a descendant of Adam and Eve (Luke 3:23-38) while at the same time being the "One and Only Son" of God. (John 1:18) Because God loved us so much, He sent Jesus to die for us and to be the means to heal our broken relationship. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21) Though Satan thought he had defeated God's plan to establish a new covenant with mankind (Jer. 31:31-34), God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus' resurrection proved that He was.

truly God's Son and showed that Satan and sin and death were defeated. Satan did "strike his [Jesus'] heel," but Jesus triumphed over Satan. (John 12:31; 16:11)

God also pronounced consequences for Adam and Eve. Though God had planned for Eve to have children (Gen. 1:28), now He would "intensify" the pain of childbearing. (3:16a) Though God intended for the woman and man to enjoy a harmonious and beneficial relationship, now they would struggle to find peace and harmony. (3:16b) While God would continue to provide food for Adam and Eve, now the man would have to struggle through "painful labor" (3:17) in order to sustain himself and his family. This cycle would continue for Adam (and all his descendants) "all the days of your life."

God then ordered one additional punishment. Before they sinned, Adam and Eve could eat from "any tree of the garden," except one, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. (Genesis 2:16-17) Now God made them leave the garden and any access to the Tree of Life. (3:23-24) As God told Adam, one day each of them and each of their descendants would die and "return to dust." (3:19)

Not only has the cycle of life and death continued ever since, so has the cycle of sin and its consequences. No one has ever lived in an environment free of sin. The Psalmist wrote that "All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one." (Psalm 14:3) Paul told the Roman believers that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Why is that true? Why can't we choose to trust and obey God as soon as we're able to know the difference between right and wrong? The problem is that we've inherited Adam's sinful nature. Paul said that "through one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners." (Rom. 5:19) His own testimony was that he was "made out of flesh, sold into sin's power." (Rom. 7:14) And Jesus pointed out that "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34) Because of our sinful human nature, we don't have the strength to avoid sinning; and once we start we can't stop. The same consequences that God pronounced on Adam and Eve come to all of us, "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), both spiritual (the breaking of our relationship with God) and physical (we all "return to dust").

While we must know the truth about the sin of Adam and Eve and the consequences for all of us, we must not forget God's promise, a promise He has already kept. God sent His Son Jesus to set us free from the guilt and slavery of our sins. (John 8:32) Though Satan led evil men to kill Jesus ("strike his heel"), Jesus defeated Satan ("strike your head") when God raised Him from the dead. Paul said it so well: "Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus, because the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:1-2) Though sin and its consequences are real, so is our victory through our faith in Christ Jesus.

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APPLICATION

As we saw in Session 1, God made us for a loving relationship with Himself. Like Adam and Eve, we have all broken that relationship when we've refused to trust and obey God; and we have all suffered the consequences. Until we face the reality of these consequences, we won't be able to experience the promise God made.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- How have you seen the consequences of sin in the lives of others?
- How have you experienced the effects of sin in your own life?
- How does knowing the reality of sin's consequences and the reality of God's promise affect your daily life?