

6. The self-imposed curse

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Have you ever had a moment when you told yourself, "Well, you really have done it. You totally blew the perfectly good thing. Now you ended up with this mess and live with it!" All of us have been there and done that one time or another. There is no one to blame, because you've been warned beforehand, yet you still chose to do it. It became a self-imposed curse.

You are not the only one who has done it. Join the club of the entire fallen humanity. The first couple, Adam and Eve, was told that they should not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But they chose to disobey the direct command of their creator God.

In my opinion, this chapter is one of the most important chapters in the whole Bible. Without the proper understanding of why and how Adam and Eve got into their sins, the Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ becomes a mute point to us.

With these in mind, we are going to study the curse that came from the fall of man today and the cure that came from the love of God the next Sunday.

A. PUTTING DOUBT IN OUR HEARTS

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"

Apparently, before the curse pronounced in Genesis 3:14-15, the serpent was different than what we know today as a serpent. Please do not speculate what the previous serpent looked like. Remember what I taught you: When the Bible is silent, remain silent.

One interesting thing, from what we have learned in first two chapters, when God spoke, He brought life and order, but when satan spoke, he brought death and chaos.

Satan brought his temptation against the woman because he knew that she was more vulnerable to attack, since she didn't hear God's command first hand. He also knew that woman has more tendencies to long for spiritual things than man in general. In fact, that is why many of the founders and leaders of cults have been women, such as Christian Science and New Age.

Satan's first attack was against the Word of God. From the beginning, satan has tried to deceive God's people by undermining God's Word. He can undermine just as effectively by getting us to neglect God's Word as by getting us to doubt it.

B. THE CONVERSATION THAT SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED

Genesis 3:2-3 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

I find two serious faults of Eve that still apply to many modern day Christians:

1) Listening to satan's deceptions

Eve's first mistake was carrying on a conversation with satan. The devil is the father of all lies as Jesus said. You may say, "I don't talk to satan." But if you do what he encourages you to do, it is the same as you're listening to him.

2) Not having God's Word properly in her heart

Eve misquoted God's command to Adam. To make the matter worse, she added to the command and put words in God's mouth when she said, "nor shall you touch it." God has never said that. She could hang upside down from a branch if she wanted or they could have built a tree house on that tree. God's command to them was "not to eat it."

When we start to exchange God's Word with men's, that is when we really are digging ourselves into massive trouble.

Revelation 22:18-19 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This means that there is an extremely high price to pay for tampering with the Word of God. What a solemn warning this is for the Bible critics who have tampered with this Bible in their arrogant self-confidence that they consider that they are equipped intellectually and spiritually enough to determine what is true and what is not true in the Word of God. I don't want to be them on the Judgment Day of the Great White Throne.

C. MIXING TRUTH WITH LIES

Genesis 3:4-5 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die (False). 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened (True), and you will be like God (False), knowing good and evil (True)."

Satan effectively laid the groundwork. He drew Eve into a conversation with him and planted the seed of doubt about God's Word, and he exposed Eve's incomplete understanding of God's Word. Now he moves in for the kill, with an outright contradiction of what God said.

Satan first wanted Eve to forget all about what God said about the consequences of sin which is death. When we know and remember the consequences of sin, we are more likely to give up the passing pleasures of sin.

Satan tried to portray God as a conniving jealous and mean Master who doesn't want to share good things, such as the fruits from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with Adam and Eve.

Then, here comes the ultimate bait for mankind: "You will be like God." This old lie has been repackaged in many different wrapping materials. Mormonism claims that we are little gods. New Age movement cries out that there is gods within all of us. All we have to do is enlighten ourselves to achieve that divine stage.

Even within the rank of Christianity some false teachers teach their congregation with this garbage. Kenneth Copeland said, "Cow begets cow, dog begets dog. Since we are children of God, we are little gods." That is an utter heresy and it is damnable. Yes, those who are born-again are children of God, but we are not gods.

The liberals and the atheists take from the Word of God to dilute it, and God has warned against that. The cults and false teachers add to the Word of God to suit their needs, and God warns against that.

Please note that satan does not come up with pure lies which are rarely effective. He mixes lies with truth and gives some credit to his deceptions.

D. THE FALL OF MAN

Genesis 3:6 So when (1) the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that (2) it was pleasant to the eyes, and (3) a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Eve surrendered to this temptation in exactly the way the apostle John describes in 1 John 2:16.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

First, she gave in to the lust of the flesh – “saw that it was good for food”, then she gave in to the lust of the eyes – “pleasant to the eyes”, then she gave in to the pride of life “desirable to make one wise”.

Jesus was tempted in the same threefold way in Matthew 4:1-11: an appeal to the physical appetites, an appeal to covetous and emotional desires, and an appeal to pride. Yet, He didn't fall for satan's temptations. How did He fight back? Each time He was tempted, He fought back with the Word of God – “It is written.” For Eve's case, she already distorted the words from God, so she went down hard.

I do not think that the devil has changed his tactics today. He uses the same tactics with you and me, and the reason that he still uses them is that they work. He hasn't needed to change his tactics, because we all seem to fall for the same line.

One of my favorite Christian pastors is Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was a German pastor and theologian under the Nazi regime said this profoundly: “Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.” I don't believe for one moment that either Adam or Eve were thinking about what the Lord told them or His love for them. They both looked at the forbidden fruit and they wanted them. That's all they had in mind.

Though Eve was tempted by satan, satan couldn't cram the fruit down her throat. Eve was completely responsible for her own action. She couldn't rightly say, “the devil made me do it.”

Not only did Eve sin, but she became the agent of temptation for Adam. But when Adam ate, he was not deceived as Eve was. Adam sinned with his eyes wide open, in open rebellion against God.

In God's order of the human family, the husband is the head of the family. The wife is to submit to the husband. But here, we see Eve giving the forbidden fruit to Adam and he, without any resistant word, submitted to her. The arguments between husbands and wives are about who get to have the control in the family – whether it is about finance, children's discipline issues, etc.

One of you ladies might say, “My husband is spiritually ignorant and emotionally immature. He needs to be told what needs to be done.” Well, have you ever earnestly prayed for that spiritually ignorant and emotionally immature husband to grow in the Lord through the Word of God? If you've never done that, maybe, you just like to have the control of the family.

I know of a very strong willed woman who likes to control her husbands. She went through two of them. But she was not happy that either one of them would stand up against her. You don't need to look around, she ain't here.

E. EXCUSE, EXCUSE, EXCUSE

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened" – this refers to their conscience. Before the fall, man did not have a conscience. He was innocent. Innocence is ignorance of evil. Adam and Eve did not confess their sin. They just attempted to cover it up, like the Washington politicians. They were not ready to admit their lost condition.

I was told that fig leaves are a prickly quality, which would make for very itchy coverings. Every attempt to cover up our own sins before God is just as foolish.

Adam's attempt to cover his own sin is like religion. Religion is man's effort to reach to God which is nothing more than futile effort of man's part.

Genesis 3:8-10 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Folks, this is what we do when we are sinning against God knowingly. This is what backsliders do. Some try to hide away from the voice of God while God is actively asking them to return to Him. Where can we go from His presence? Where can we run from His Omnipresence? You can run, but you cannot hide from God.

This shows that Adam and Eve knew that their attempt to cover themselves failed. They didn't proudly show off their fig-leaf outfits to God. They knew their own covering was completely inadequate, and they were embarrassed before God. There is a theological term for Adam's fig-leaf outfits – "Adam's Fall Fashion Line."

V9 is the heartfelt cry of an anguished father. God obviously knew where they were but He also knew a chasm just had been made between Himself and mankind.

Genesis 3:11-13 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" 12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13 And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Sin made Adam be afraid of God's presence and His voice. But God wanted Adam to confess his sins. Ever since Adam, men run from God's presence and don't want to listen to His voice which is the Word of God.

We all sin. But when we sin, we can still give glory to God by openly confessing without shifting the blame onto others. There is nothing you can do about yesterday's sin. Yet you can do what is right before God right now by confessing and repenting.

Adam's attempt to blame Eve is completely consistent with human nature. Few of us are willing to simply say as David did, "*I have sinned against the Lord*" in 2 Samuel 12:13.

By saying "*the woman whom You gave to be with me,*" Adam essentially blames on God for his sin.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Do not dabble with temptations, because you will lose every time. Stay far away from it.
- 2) Do not try to justify your sinful desires with out-of-context Scripture verses. If you do, you are only digging your hole deeper.
- 3) When we sin against the Lord, admit it, own it, confess it to the Lord, and repent from it.