

## **BIBLICAL MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD IV FALLOUT FROM THE FALL Genesis 3: 1-20**

*Be sure to discuss the catechism question for this week.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

What kinds of things cause you to worry? Right now, what would you say is your biggest worry?

What does Jesus say should be our biggest worry in Luke 12: 5?

Our biggest problem is our sin because sin exposes us to the just anger of God. It is necessary that we take sin very serious, just like it is necessary for a person who has cancer to take their cancer very serious. Cornelius Plantinga in his book, “Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be” which is a book about sin, says this: “My goal, then, is to renew the knowledge of a persistent reality that used to evoke in us fear, hatred and grief. Many of us have lost this knowledge, and we ought to regret the loss. For slippage in our consciousness of sin, like most fashionable follies, may be pleasant, but it is also devastating. Self-deception about our sin is a narcotic, a tranquilizing and disorienting suppression of our spiritual central nervous system. What’s devastating about (this suppression) is that...the music of creation and the still greater music of grace whistle right through our skulls, causing no catch of breath and leaving no residue. Moral beauty begins to bore us. The idea that the human race needs a Savior (or that I need a Savior) sounds quaint.”

In this study we are going to exam what sin is and how it affects us, especially how it affects our relationships as men and women.

### **STUDY**

1. Describe the conditions that the man and the woman live in at the end of chapter 2.

*The world is perfect. There is no sin and no sickness. The man and the woman live in perfect fellowship with God. There is no guilt, no fear,*

*no quarreling. There is an abundance of food. They live in perfect fellowship with the created order. There is nothing to fear. All of this is a gift from God that they did nothing to earn or deserve. All they have to do to enjoy this forever is not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

2. The serpent (Satan in physical disguise, Rev. 20:2) is described as “crafty”. This is the same word used to describe what the Gibeonites did to Joshua and Israel in Joshua 9:3-15. What does “crafty” mean?

*Crafty means that the serpent is deceiving. He is a master at trickery, at making things seem what they are not.*

3. Compare this with what Jesus says about Satan in John 8: 44. What is Satan’s primary weapon against us?

*Satan’s primary weapon against us is lies. His main strategy is to get us to believe lies and so to act contrary to the truth of what God says.*

4. How does the serpent’s question in v. 1, challenge God?

*He is calling into question God’s goodness and kindness. He is trying to get the woman to question God’s love for her. He is seeking to undermine her faith or confidence in God and his ability to provide for her.*

5. What kind of an attitude does this question reveal?

*He is casting doubt on the character of God. He reveals by his question his contempt for God. He is accusing God of being miserly and stingy. He is revealing a hatred for God.*

6. Compare the woman’s answer with 2: 16-17. How is it different?

(NOTE: The NIV does not translate a Hebrew word. The last clause of her answer, “...or you will die” actually says, as the NAS & RSV have it, “...lest you die.”)

➤ *God says they can eat from “any” tree, she just says “the trees” . She thereby does not emphasize the abundance of God’s provision.*

- *God only says they cannot eat from the tree, she says they cannot touch it. She thereby accuses God of an unreasonable harshness.*
- *God says that in the day they eat they will most certainly die (The Hebrew is very emphatic). She softens this by including the word, "lest". She implies that perhaps they will die but it is not certain they will die. She thus is calling into question God's justice, his power, his authority, his trustworthiness.*

7. How does Satan's answer in v. 4 challenge God?

*He calls God a liar when he says she will surely not die if she eats. He challenges God's right, commitment and authority to judge. "God can't do anything to you, he isn't going to call you to account for what you do because he can't. You're safe, you have nothing to fear because God can't do what he threatens." He challenges God's power, justice, authority and truthfulness. He accuses God of holding out on the man and the woman. God, he accuses, is just trying to keep them under his thumb. He knows that life would be way better for them if they would eat and so he is voicing empty threats just to keep them in line, under his control. "This garden is OK but things could be a whole lot better and God knows this but he doesn't want to share with you." God is not good and what he gives is not the best.*

All sin is like this. All sin treats God with contempt. Sin is not merely an immoral act but it is an anti-God attitude followed by anti-God action. Here is the wickedness of sin. God is perfect and always deals with us in perfect justice, kindness and goodness. Yet we declare God is harsh, repressive, capricious, unkind, unfaithful and impotent every time we violate one of his commands. Every sin is always against God. Every sin is always an assault on his character, his integrity.

8. Pick a common sin and brainstorm how it treats God with contempt.

*Here is an example. Only use this as a last resort. Work to have the group come up with your own example. Consider the sin of retaliation. One of your co-workers (or sibling or spouse or friend) says something that hurts you. Let's say he does it intentionally. He is jealous of a promotion you received and he says to you, "I'm so tired of how you never help. You just sit around and let the rest of us do the work unless the boss is here, then you work and show her how hard you are*

*working. All of us see it. You may be fooling the boss but you're not fooling me." Now, let's say this is an untrue statement. You are not lazy and what you are being accused of is not true. You respond by telling him in a loud and defensive tone of voice, "You're the one who is lazy." You begin to give him specific examples of where he has fallen short. Then for the next week you don't talk to him and when you see he needs help you intentionally turn your back and walk away. You gossip about him to other workers. In other words, you retaliate, you aim to pay him back for the evil he has done to you. God commands us in I Peter 3: 10, "Do not repay evil for evil or insult for insult but with blessing because to this you were called so that you might inherit a blessing."*

*Now we all can see how our retaliation is an affront to the co-worker but how does it despise God?*

- ❖ *You call God a liar, because your actions show you believe your retaliation will lead to greater happiness than if you bless the one who curses you.*
- ❖ *You declare God is impotent to help you. Your action is more certain to keep this person from harming you than God is able to keep you safe.*
- ❖ *You declare that God is unjust. He doesn't defend the innocent. You have to make sure you are vindicated, because God can't be counted on to do so.*
- ❖ *You are declaring God has no right to command you. Who does he think he is telling you to bless the jerk who does this to you? What right does he have to tell you what is moral and immoral behavior? Doesn't he understand how hurt you are?*
- ❖ *You are despising his gifts to you. You are using the intelligence he gave you, the ability to communicate he gave you, the air he gave you to violate his command.*
- ❖ *You are despising the death of Christ for sin. You are acting as though the sin committed against you is of far greater consequence than the myriad of sins you have committed against God*

**Sin brings confusion and conflict into our relationships as men and women because sin is a despising of God**

9. In Genesis 2 what is the order of authority that it built into creation?

God makes man. Then he makes the woman from the man and for the man. Both man and woman are placed in authority over the animals. God is the head of man, man is the head of woman and both man and woman have authority over the animals.

10. In Genesis 3: 1-6, how is that order reversed?

*The serpent, a creature, is clearly in charge of the conversation. He initiates it and directs it to his desired end. The serpent does not address the man, but the woman. He intentionally reverses the order within the male-female relationship. The man, rather than exercising his leadership to put a stop to the conversation, stands passively by while the woman is led astray. Then, the woman gives the fruit to the man and the man, passively eats what he is given, without protest. God and his will clearly takes a back seat. He is not consulted. His opinion does not matter. He is at the bottom of this chain of authority.*

**Sin brings confusion and conflict into our relationships as men and women because sin reverses God's creation order.**

11. After the eyes of the man and woman are opened, how do they respond to their nakedness?

*Their nakedness becomes something to cover up. They experience true guilt and the shame that guilt brings. They feel exposed and vulnerable and so they try to cover up the symbol of their guilt, nakedness, in order to escape the reality of their guilt.*

12. When they hear God approaching how do they respond? Why do they do this (see John 3: 19-20)?

*They seek to avoid God by hiding in the bushes. They know they are guilty and cannot bear the thought of facing God and his justice. They act like the criminals they are. No criminal is happy when the police and the judge show up.*

13. After God summons the man into his presence how does the man defend his hiding behavior?

*He justifies his behavior by saying that he was afraid. He had to hide because he was afraid. This is rationalization. "It makes perfect sense that I'm hiding from you God. I mean, I was afraid. What did you expect me to do. Just stand out here in the open and wait for you to come and see me, standing there naked, exposed?" Just in this opening question and response we see how much has changed in God's relationship with man. Rather than the relationship of a beneficent father with his obedient child, we have the relationship of a judge with an accused criminal.*

14. How does the man respond after God directly asks him if he has eaten from the tree he commanded him not to eat from?

*He blames the woman and he blames God. He had to eat because his wife, who the Lord gave to him, gave him the fruit to eat. Like a true criminal he blames those in authority for his wrongdoing.*

15. How does the woman respond when God confronts her?

*She blames the snake. She was deceived, how could she have not eaten?*

16. What are some common ways you have heard others blame others for the evil they have done (I know you would never do this but what are some ways you've seen others do this?)?

*"You made me mad." "I would be a better mom, if you kids would pick up after yourselves." "I wouldn't honk the horn at people if they would drive in a reasonable way." "I'd tell the truth if my dad wouldn't get so bent out of shape about everything." "I'd be a better husband if you'd stop nagging me." "I'd be a better wife if you'd just pay attention to me."*

**Sin brings confusion and conflict into our relationships as men and women because sinners will do anything to avoid facing their sin.**

17. Verses 14-19 are the sentencing portion of the trial. In these verses God sentences each of the criminals in turn.

18. In v. 16 what part of the woman's existence is going to be affected by her participation in this sin?

*Sin is going to make the entire process of bearing and raising children, painful. Sin is also going to affect her relationship with her husband. In short, the primary effects of sin, for the woman will be felt in her relationships with her family.*

19. In vv. 17-19, what part of the man's existence is going to be affected by his participation in this sin?

*He is going to struggle in the world of work and accomplishment. The physical world will not cooperate with him. He will work in vain and will eventually return to the ground from which he was taken.*

20. Compare the last sentence of v. 16, "Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you", with Genesis 4:7. What does it mean for the woman to "desire" her husband and for the man to "rule over" his wife?

*In Genesis 4:7 the desire of sin is to conquer and destroy Cain. In the same way, the woman, as a result of sin, is unwilling to be "a suitable helper" for the man but rather wants to dominate and control him. God wants Cain to master or rule over his sin. He wants Cain to conquer and defeat sin. In the same way, while the woman is going to seek to dominate the man, the man will harshly rule over the woman. Sin brings intense conflict into the male-female relationship. Men use their usually superior physical and economic strength to subdue and oppress women. Women use their superior relational, verbal and sexual powers to seek to dominate men. There is indeed a war between the sexes that exists because of sin.*

21. What evidences do you see in our culture at large or in particular relationships of this conflict that sin has brought into the perfect harmony of male-female relationships?

**Sin brings confusion and conflict into our relationships as men and women because sin brings God's judgment.**