

Notes And Helps to Instructors

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group through the treasures of God's word! You may feel overwhelmed or inadequate, but you can do this! The leader notes are designed to help you grow in knowledge and love for Christ and for you to help pass what you have received to your group. Here are some suggestions to help equip you to grow in your teaching and leading ability.

- These lessons could simply be read, and a group would receive something but that is not how they are designed. The notes are designed to grow you as a leader so you might tailor the lesson for the needs of your group. Some groups may not have much of a knowledge base in the bible, so the concepts must be brought down to their level. Other groups may have a large knowledge base and you may challenge them with more information. The key is to know your group. If you begin leading a group in one way and find that it is not connecting, it is alright to modify and bring down or raise up the level of information.
- The more preparation you do the stronger you will be as a leader. Let the study material be a joy for you! Let it feed you as you prepare! The more you are fed the more you have to give to your group.
- There is no set time on how long a lesson may take. Lessons could be slowed down and take several weeks to finish. Perhaps in leading a group, one question captivates the group and leads to a fruitful conversation. If that happens, that is good! You are in no hurry. If you can finish the material in a week, then great! But if it takes several, that is great as well! The important thing is that they receive deeply from the gospel of Jesus.
- Pray about your lesson! Pray as you prepare! Pray as you teach! Remember we do not teach or exercise our gifts in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the heart and mind. Pray for the Spirit to move in your heart and the heart of the group.

May our merciful Triune God bless your study and your group that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

In Christ,

Prison Discipleship Ministry

Lessons in Life -- Lesson 2 – Where Did You Come From – Part 2?

Introduction: We live in a world that says (1) You came from nothing. (2) When you die, you go back to nothing. If we believe this, then what does the present mean? It means nothing so we live as if nothing matters. We live for wine, women, and song. Yet everyone knows that murder, stealing, lying, and adultery are wrong. How are we to balance the conflict between our conscience and the values of the world? The Bible begins by telling us where we came from.

From a Bible read, read Genesis 2:4 through 2:25. Read it several times first from whatever translation you have. Then find a modern Bible translation such as The New King James, English Standard Version, or New American Standard. Read it several more times and answer these questions:

Genesis 1 tells the account of how God created the world in seven days. Genesis 2:4-25 goes back and fills in some details. We will look at 2:4-17 in this lesson.

From what did God make man (2:4-7)?

What is the Garden of Eden like (2:8-14)?

What two trees in the garden are named (2:9)?

What does Genesis 2:15 tell us about work? About idleness?

What is the one command God gives Adam (2:16-17)?

What does “knowledge of good and evil” mean?

What is the penalty for disobedience?

1 Peter 5:5 says that "God resists the proud but give grace to the humble." What have you learned from this lesson about life that would cause you to be more humble?

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It is very important that we review the lesson from last week. Three key points from last week need to be emphasized constantly in this course and all our courses. These three points are:

1. Who's in control? God is. How do we know that? We know that from the phrases "and God said . . . and it was so." God has all power.
2. What is He like? He is good. Moses repeats the word "good" throughout the narrative.
3. Why does He use words? He is rational. We can understand who He is. We can know Him. (He communicates in propositions. A proposition is a declarative sentence with a subject and a verb that can be either true or false.) He tells us truth, reality about us and the world we live in.

From what did God make man (2:4-7)?

He made man from the dirt.

What is the Garden of Eden like (2:8-14)?

The garden was God's goodness and perfection on display for humanity. He filled it with plants both for beauty and for food. He had waters flowing through it to water it and for the substance of man. The rivers and garden were full of precious stones for beauty and showing the unsearchable riches of the goodness, kindness, and provision of God.

As we spoke about in the previous lesson, the garden was not simply a nice collection of plants. The garden was a temple-sanctuary. It was the place where the presence of God walked, spoke, and where fellowship with God could be experienced. That is what makes the garden so special. It was the place where man fellowshiped with God. It is where he walked in God's presence. It is where God spoke with mankind.

What two trees in the garden are named (2:9)?

The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

What does Genesis 2:15 tell us about work? About idleness?

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. (Gen. 2:15 NKJ)

God ordained man to work before the fall. Work, per se, is not a curse. After the fall, a curse came upon our work (Gen 3:17-19) but work itself is not a curse. Work is good for man.

Idleness is not good for man because man was created to work.

What is the one command God gives Adam (2:16-17)?

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen. 1:1-2:17 NKJ)

This is very important: Notice that the penalty for disobedience is death. The reward therefore for obedience is life. In other words, the promise of eternal life was given to man in the garden before the fall. So, the garden was not the goal of humanity. The goal of humanity was eternal life with God.

This test/trail was given to man because man needed positive righteousness to live eternally with God. In other words, heaven must be earned. If man obeyed, he would have the positive righteousness needed to live eternally with God. He would have shown

himself actually righteous and obedient and the human race with him as he is the head of humanity, our perfect representative.

What does “knowledge of good and evil” mean?

In Hebrew idiom polarity equals totality. Examples: 1 Kings 3:9; Psalm 103:12; Psalm 1:1-2; Micah 3:1-2.

Remember our three questions from Genesis 1:

1. Who’s in control?
2. What’s He like?
3. How do we know?

This tree tests man’s true belief regarding God. Is He really in control? Is He really good? How will I know? Will man let the all-powerful, all good, all knowing God guide him or will man take the place of God and become a god who decides good and evil.

It also speaks of experience. Man knew good and evil by the commandments of God, but he had not experienced evil or acted in positive obedience. The name spoke to the reality of the trial. Would he experience evil or good.

What is the penalty for disobedience?

God said that if they eat from the tree, they will surely die. In Hebrew, it is an infinitive absolute which has the force of intensification. It literally says in the Hebrew, “In dying you will die.” In other words, there is more in the punishment than simply physical death. When sin entered the creation, death came with it in all its forms.

Adam and Eve did not on the day they sinned simply drop dead on the spot. God would have been good and just to do so and be done with His humanity, but in His kindness, He did not do that. But death entered when they sinned. Man was created to live eternally with God, not to die. Sometimes at funerals people say things like, “death is a natural part of life.” In all respect for those who were trying to console the bereaved by this sentiment, it is very, very wrong. The most unnatural thing in the world is for a human to die. That is why we weep at funerals. It is good and right for us to do so because we know this is not the way it was supposed to be. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. Eternal death is the appropriate punishment for sins against an eternally, holy God.

But moreover, since Adam was our federal head, our perfect representative, his sin spread to all his descendants. Notice Gen 5:1-3:

“This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. 3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.”

God created Adam and Eve in his own image in righteousness, holiness, and truth. But here, Adam is now bringing forth his offspring in his fallen image. All humankind has inherited the original guilt of Adam, and also the corruption of sin. This is what is often referred to as “original sin.” Original sin is not the eating of the fruit, but the imputed guilt of Adam’s sin and the inherited corruption of sin.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism helpfully explains this in Question 18:

“Question: Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate wherein man fell?

“Answer: The sinfulness of that estate wherein man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it (Rom. 5:12-21; Eph. 2:1-3).”

To see the truth of the inherited guilt of Adams sin, notice in the rest of Genesis 5, there is the constant refrain of “so-and-so lived x number of years, AND HE DIED.” The fall and the guilt of sin is why we die.

“2 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-- 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Rom 5:12-14 ESV)”

God shows the inherited corruption of sin, when we read on to Genesis 4. Quickly we see murder, polygamy, and unequal justice. The rest of Genesis reads like a crime scene. The fall is serious and affects all humanity. Even to the point where God brings the flood to judge the world, because he says, “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was

great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:5 ESV)”

Even after the flood, God says,

“And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. (Gen 8:21 ESV)”

We are and will always be sinners who are in need of the grace of Christ. And this is the good news! Jesus is the one who succeeded where Adam failed. He obeyed God perfectly in thought, word, and deed. He died the death on the cross our sins deserve. He rose again from the grave conquering death for us. When we repent of our sins, and place our trust in Him, our sins are given to Him and He forgives and appeases the good and righteous wrath of God against our sins. He gives us his perfect life as a gift of his grace, which we receive and rest in by faith alone. Consider Romans 5:15-21:

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 5:15-21 ESV)”

1 Peter 5:5 says that “God resists the proud but give grace to the humble.” What have you learned from this lesson about life that would cause you to be more humble?

Let the students talk. Listen to them. If they are not open to talking, have a time of quiet prayer.

Here are some further thoughts with concrete examples on original sin and how man places himself in the place of God to decide good and evil. Original sin results in actual sins:

Original sin – lust to be God by placing oneself in the position of knowing good and evil e.g. make moral judgments and pronounce them good or evil

Good (in man's sight but evil in God's sight):

- Skiping worship to work, watch TV,
- Have sex with a woman not your wife
- Pornography
- Vulgar or violent songs, videos, movies, TV shows, etc.
- Dressing immodestly (especially for women)
- Murder, selling drugs
- Getting drunk, high, etc.
- Cursing
- Hating my enemy, getting even with him, revenge
- Avoiding taxes

Evil (in man's sight but good in God's sight):

- Going to a faithful church every Sunday
- Getting married
- Being faithful to the wife of your youth
- Taking care of your children (no matter who their mother is or how she has treated you)
- Honoring your parents, family
- Avoiding drunkenness, doing drugs, etc.
- Dressing modestly
- Paying taxes
- Forgiving my enemy