

Lessons in Life -- Lesson 17 – God Brings the Gospel to Eden Part 2

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

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Introduction: Re-read Genesis 3:1-15. In this lesson on Genesis 3:16 we will look at the curse God places on the woman.

Read this passage at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

¹⁶ To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;
In pain you shall bring forth children;
Your desire *shall be* for your husband,
And he shall rule over you." (Gen. 3:16 NKJ)

These four lines are Hebrew poetry. We should think about them as couplets. A couplet is made of two lines. So we have two couplets. What does the first couplet (first two lines) of this curse tell us about the relationships that the woman will have in her home?

The second couplet (lines 3 and 4) can be confusing. Sometimes both lines of a couplet will say the same thing using different words. Other times one line will say the opposite of the first line. We call this a contrasting couplet. What is the meaning of “your desire will be for your husband”? What will the woman seek to do in her relationship with her husband? How is this desire a curse?

How is “and he shall rule over you” a curse? What does this imply about the relationship between a husband and wife? How does living with someone or having sex with someone outside of marriage make this curse even worse?

In this curse God is telling us about the relationships between men and women in a fallen, cursed world. This verse explains the sins between men and women because of the fall into sin. Does this give men the right to mistreat women? Does this give women the right to mistreat men? Read Ephesians 5:21-33. In light of the coming of Christ, how are Christian men and women to treat each other?

Think and pray about these questions: How have you abused women? How have women abused you? You do not need to write this out here. Take these thoughts and pray about them. Ask God to change you. Ask God to give you forgiveness. Read James 5:16. Consider writing a letter to someone and confess your sins against that person to that person. Remember that all of the Christian life is one of repentance. Ask God to continually show you your sins in this area and help you to repent of them.

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In Genesis 1:27, God created man and woman equal in image of God. And they were then given a command and a blessing,

“28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. (Gen 1:28-29 ESV).”

Man as male and female bore the image of God, made in true righteousness and holiness, and having the truth and presence of God as theirs. They had no sin in their relationship with God, nor their relationship with each other. They could stand naked and unafraid before God and before each other.

But when they sinned, they realized they were naked and immediately tried to cover up their sin with their own works and cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7). When brought to judgement before God, Adam did not honor and protect his wife, but blamed her. She did not admit her sin but blamed the serpent. In reality, they both blamed God. The fall had affected their relationship with God, whom now they hide from out of fear of their sin and blame for their sin, and with each other, whom they now blame for each other's faults. The fall has shattered their relational world. But even though they sinned, that command and blessing God gave them was still in place, and it is to that these curses come.

First, notice that instead of taking dominion over the creation, they followed a created creature, the devil, who obtained dominion over them in his temptations. Second, they took from the creation what was not theirs and used it for their own ends instead of receiving that which God gives in love to them. Third, they attacked each other instead of coming near one another in love to facilitate the fruitfulness of their marriage and multiply.

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So, in this first word of curse, the woman hears a curse in her relationships; and consequently both, men, and women, share in this curse. Since we are all humans, this curse affects us all. First, cursed is fruitfulness and multiplying. Pains would be increased in her childbirth and in pain she will bring forth children. This does not mean that God made babies bigger, but rather, that now she will bring forth children in a world that is fallen. It is painful to raise children in this fallen world. Not only will we be sinners and sin against them as we raise them, but they are sinners and will have their own sinful hearts. Moreover, they will be raised in a sinful world where others will sin against them.

She does not have to wait long to see the reality of this curse. In the very next chapter, she gives birth to two sons, Cain, and Abel. Cain kills his brother Abel. (Gen 4:8). The curse is alive, and she experiences firsthand the pain in raising children in this world.

The second couplet (lines 3 and 4) can be confusing. Sometimes both lines of a couplet will say the same thing using different words. Other times one line will say the opposite of the first line. We call this a contrasting couplet. What is the meaning of “your desire will be for your husband”? What will the woman seek to do in her relationship with her husband? How is this desire a curse?

The first act of the curse pertains to the mother’s relationship with her children, now this second curse pertains to her relationship to her husband. The first part of this second curse says that her desire will be for her husband. In Genesis 2 God created Eve to be Adam’s helper. Now that sin has come, God is telling her that she will no longer be content to be a helper but will seek to dominate or rule her husband. But this lack of submission will be met by the sinfulness of her husband who will rule her in sinful ways. Just as God will bring futility to the man in his work so also will He bring futility to the woman in her desires to control or rule her husband. Despite her cleverness in manipulating, playing games, or using sexual attraction to gain the upper hand, she will fail. Only in a Christian marriage, where both parties through the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, is this curse weakened. See Paul’s instructions to wives and husbands in Ephesians 5.

How is “and he shall rule over you” a curse? What does this imply about the relationship between a husband and wife? How does living with someone or having sex with someone outside of marriage make this curse even worse?

Eve accused God of not being a good leader, protector, provider, and ruler over her. So here, the man, who was to lead, protect, provide for her in a nurturing relationship, now becomes a ruler who thwarts her attempts to find comfort by ruling her husband. Instead, he will rule over her. Apart from the gospel, that rule will be tyrannical, sinful, and over-bearing.

This situation is magnified when living with someone outside of marriage. When there is no covenant of marriage, there are no promises, no stakes, nothing but lust and feeling. The need then for the woman for her man and the possibility of manipulation for that

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closeness is increased, as is the tyrannical tendencies of the man. It is only in a gospel-centered marriage can the affects of the fall be seen, named, and brought to Jesus, where He can redeem the relationship.

The fall will affect our relationships with striving and sin. Marriage is two sinners, married to each other, and sinning against each other. Now this is where the gospel comes in. It is in the gospel, where sinful humanity is reconciled with a holy God, that we sinners are reconciled to each other.

In this curse God is telling us about the relationships between men and women in a fallen, cursed world. This verse explains the sins between men and women because of the fall into sin. Does this give men the right to mistreat women? Does this give women the right to mistreat men? Read Ephesians 5:21-33. In light of the coming of Christ, how are Christian men and women to treat each other?

Marriage is not a tyranny. Both partners mutually submit to one another (Eph 5:21). And they do that by submitting to Christ. Marriage is a picture of the gospel. The husband plays the role of Christ, protecting, providing, sacrificing, loving, and serving his wife. He washes her with the word, prays with and for her, loves her and places her first over even his own desires, as Christ did not come to be served but to serve and give his life for his bride, the church. The wife loves, honors, and respects her husband, not because he deserves it all the time (he does not as he is a sinner and will sin against her), but because Christ deserves it. She loves him as Christ loves the church. She loves, honors, and respects him because Christ deserves that love, honor, and respect. In the mutual submission, one to another in the gospel, is this curse redeemed and as much as possible, and in an ever-growing way, the curse is lessened until the final day when Christ comes for us, his bride, and all the curse is finally removed from our relationship with God and with each other.

Think and pray about these questions: How have you abused women? How have women abused you? You do not need to write this out here. Take these thoughts and pray about them. Ask God to change you. Ask God to give you forgiveness. Read James 5:16. Consider writing a letter to someone and confess your sins against that person to that person. Remember that all of the Christian life is one of repentance. Ask God to continually show you your sins in this area and help you to repent of them.

Listen a lot, and then listen some more. Let the spirit work in them as he searches their hearts to answer these questions. Maybe share how you have sinned against your wife or in your relationships. Be one of them, not one who stands above them. We all need the same grace of Jesus. Show them what repentance looks like and that you need it daily as well.