

Lessons in Life -- Lesson 18 – God Brings the Gospel to Eden Part 3

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 3:1-16. In this lesson on Genesis 3:17-19 we will look at the curse God places on Adam and all men.

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

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;

In toil you shall eat *of* it

All the days of your life.

¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,

And you shall eat the herb of the field.

¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

Till you return to the ground,

For out of it you were taken;

For dust you *are*,

And to dust you shall return." (Gen. 3:17-19 NKJ)

Based on 3:17 what caused Adam's sin?

Are God's commands good suggestions? How do you look at God's commands? Name one command of God that you have taken lightly.

Re-read Genesis 2:15. Was there work before Adam's sin? Based on 3:17-19, what has now changed?

How does knowing that your work is cursed affect your attitude to work? Your expectations?

Read Matthew 6:19-34. What does this passage teach us about God's provisions for us even though work is cursed?

What do these passages teach us about the frustrations that come to us through our work?

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Based on 3:17 what caused Adam's sin?

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

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and 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." (Gen. 3:4-6 NKJ)

Adam's sin was his lust to be God. Adam disbelieved God who said Adam would die if he ate the fruit. Adam questioned God's power to bring death on him. Adam no longer believed God was good. Adam believed the lie of Satan thinking he could actually take God's place. Adam had lust in his heart, and he saw the fruit as "desirous to make one wise." If he ate the fruit, he would be like God.

Are God's commands good suggestions? How do you look at God's commands? Name one command of God that you have taken lightly.

This opens up a discussion about the law of God and whether they feel that God is good. Are God's commands things he suggests or are they commands that bring eternal weight from a God who is good, loving, just, holy, kind, merciful, all-powerful, all-knowing, and wants the best for us because he loves us. Let the Spirit search their heart for ways that they have not held God's law dear or treated God loosely. Let the Spirit show them places where they need to repent, even if they are not ready to say or do so yet. Let the Spirit do that prework in their heart.

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Re-read Genesis 2:15. Was there work before Adam’s sin? Based on 3:17-19, what has now changed?

Genesis 2:15 says, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (ESV)” Work was part of the creation. Work is not part of the fall; work was a good gift given by God to humanity.

Adam used the good creation of God (the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) to take what was not his, so now creation in his curse rebels against Adam, who was called to have dominion and subdue the earth. What now has changed is that “thorns and thistles” will plague our work. Now, because of the fall, our work will be strenuous, often frustrating, sometimes futile, and difficult. Now, simply to put bread on the table, the reality of the fall will literally drip off the brow of man.

How does knowing that your work is cursed affect your attitude to work? Your expectations?

This is a place to listen. This may be the first time they have heard that their work is cursed and may not have had much time to consider that fact. But I’m sure they resonate with the concept. Most people know that it is hard to make a living; even criminals know this. So, listen and hear what they have to say so you may wisely and surgically bring the gospel to their hearts. Listen to their expectations. Do they expect that they are guaranteed riches and a “good life” just because they work? Are they impatient for God to provide? Do they believe that provision comes from their hand and labor only? Are they angry at God for not providing their expectations in their life for what quality of life they believe they should have? Questions like these are good to listen for, to see the condition of their heart.

Read Matthew 6:19-34. What does this passage teach us about God’s provisions for us even though work is cursed?

Matthew 6:19-34 begins with a warning from Jesus not to store up treasures on earth as those treasures are so often lost. But store up eternal treasures in heaven. For what we treasure truly, is where we set our heart (6:19-21). So, our hearts should be set upon Jesus and his righteousness (6:33). We cannot serve two masters; our heart only has room for one. Either it will be money or mammon (the lusts of the material things of the world) or it will be God (Jesus and his righteousness).

Because we are often weak in faith and the curse makes our work so hard, we are often tempted to feel as if God does not care, and we are overwhelmed with anxiety about the provision we need in life. So, Jesus lovingly encourages us not to fear and not be anxious about the material things we need in this world (6:25). Jesus tells us to look at the birds and the flowers. God in his mercy and love feeds the lowest of creatures and clothes his creation so beautifully. And we, who are made in God’s Image, can trust Him that he will likewise feed and clothe us (6:26). And for all our anxiety, we cannot change one more

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second to our lives (in fact so often it actually harms our health and shortens our days, but that is not in the text, just science) (6:27).

As children of God, we should be those who trust in the goodness of our Father through Christ to feed and clothe us. He knows we need these things before we even ask. So, we can work well, knowing that Jesus will provide us with the things we need. He loves us and cares for us. Jesus died to provide for us our ultimate need, surely, he will give us our earthly needs as well (6:31-34).

What do these passages teach us about the frustrations that come to us through our work?

Listen to them here. Let them tell you what they have learned. Much of what it teaches us about the frustrations that come through are work are listed above.

Jesus knows that we are weak and often so is our faith. He knows that we often are filled with fear, anxiety, and lack of trust in his goodness. So, we should place our eyes on his ultimate provision to us in Christ. Jesus is our righteousness, he is our hope, he loves us, cares for us, and moreover, he walked with us through the curse of this world, and he continues to walk with us now. He is not holding out on us, but provides richly, graciously, and beyond all we can ask or think.